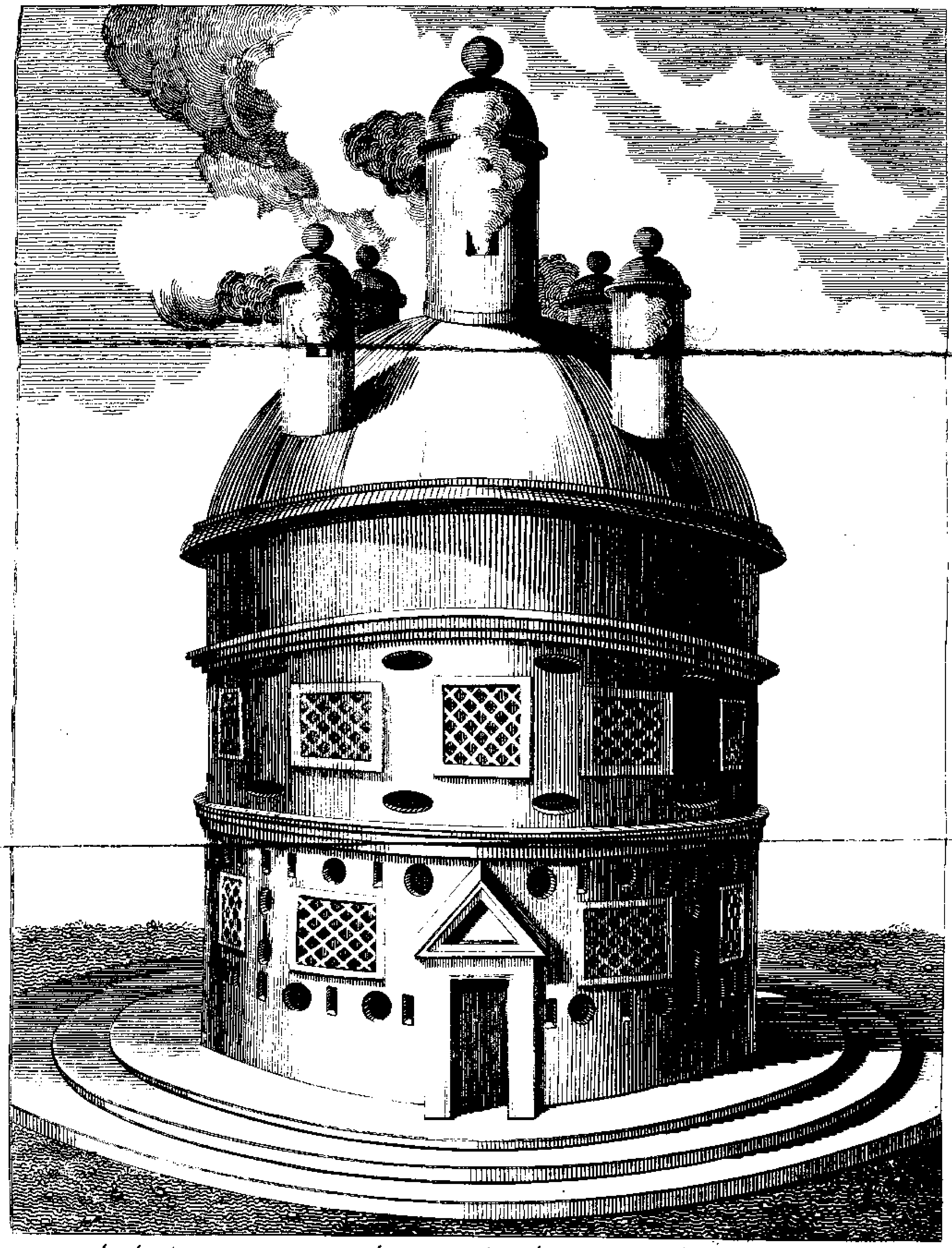
ANTIQUE SCULPTURE.

SEEVA BRAHMA VEESHNU Barlow sculp

copied from the Stupendous CAVERN-PAGODA *of* ELEPHANTA, *and supposed by* NIEBUHR *to represent the aspects of the grand triple divinity,* BRAHMA VEESHNU & SEEVA

AN ANCIENT PERSIAN FIRE-TEMPLE,



in which the SACRED FLAME kindled by the Rays of the SUN was preserved
incessantly Burning, & attended Day & Night by the Officiating Magi.

from Dr Hyde.

375 . 69.

INDIAN ANTIQUITIES:

OR,

DISSERTATIONS

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RELATIVE TO

THE ANCIENT GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS,
THE PURE SYSTEM OF PRIMEVAL THEOLOGY,
THE GRAND CODE OF CIVIL LAWS,
THE ORIGINAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT,
THE WIDELY-EXTENDED COMMERCE, AND
THE VARIOUS AND PROFOUND LITERATURE,

OF HINDOSTAN:

COMPARED, THROUGHOUT, WITH THE
RELIGION, LAWS, GOVERNMENT, and LITERATURE,

OF

PERSIA, EGYPT, AND GREECE,

THE WHOLE INTENDED
AS INTRODUCTORY TO AND ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THE HISTORY OF HINDOSTAN,

UPON A COMPREHENSIVE SCALE.

VOL. II.

Commencing the SURVEY of the THEOLOGY of HINDOSTAN; and confidering that Theology, principally, in its phyfical and fymbolical Allufions.

LONDON:

Printed, for the Author, by H. L. Galabin, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street,

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DISSERTATION II.

THE

THEOLOGY

OF

HINDOSTAN:

COMPREHENDING THE HISTORY OF THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND DIFFUSION, OF SUPERSTITION, DURING THE MOST EARLY PERIODS, IN ASIA.

54
36
163
22
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INTRODUCTORY PROSPECTUS

OF THE

CONTENTS

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OF THE DISSERTATION OF THE

THEOLOGY OF HINDOSTAN.

THE extenſive ſubject of the Indian Theology is conſidered in the following Diſſertation under two general heads, the phyſical and ſymbolical, and the more pure and ſublime. The ancient phyſical theology of India is principally treated of in the former part of this Diſſertation, which is divided into four ſections; and, in the courſe of diſcuſſion, the Author has examined in what points the RELIGION of the ANCIENT INDIANS reſembled, 1. That of the SCYTHIANS; 2. That of the ANCIENT PERSIANS; 3. That of the ANCIENT EGYPTIANS; and, 4. That of the EARLY GREEKS.

As the ſubject is complex, and, conſequently, as no very exact order of arrangement in the inveſtigation of ſuch a multitude of obſcure and abſtracted topics could be adhered to, he ſolicits the attention of the reader to

the ſubjoined EPITOME of its contents. In the firſt ſection, retroſpective on the ancient religion of Scythia, and pointing out its analogy to that of India, the following points ſeemed to demand particular notice: Divine rites were firſt celebrated, and the ſublime precepts of philoſophy firſt taught, in the ſacred ſolitude of GROVES and CAVERNS — the caverns of Salſette and Elephanta, undoubtedly ſtupendous ſubterraneous temples of the Deity — the particular rites of religion practiſed, and ſciences taught, in thoſe caverns, reſerved for conſideration under the ſecond general head — the cave of Zoroaſter, of Epictetus, of Pythagoras, and of Mohammed. — The aſtoniſhing extent in ancient times of the conſecrated groves of Scythia and of India — the idolatrous devotion practiſed in conſecrated groves ſeverely anathematiſed in holy writ — the ſanguinary rites performed in thoſe of Scythia — the very ancient, but not the original, religion of India proved to be of a ſanguinary caſt — the NERAMEDHA JUG, or human ſacrifice — the ASWAMMEDHA JUG, or horſe-ſacrifice — the GOMEDHA JUG, or ſacrifice of the bull — the benevolent Hindoo and the bloodleſs law of BRAHMA attempted to be exculpated from the *original* guilt of theſe ſanguinary rites, by ſuppoſing an interpolation of the VEDAS, and a poſſible mixture of the barbarous cuſtoms of Scythia with thoſe of India, during the early intercourſe of the two nations in the northern regions of Hindoſtan — that intercourſe proved from various circumſtances, but particularly from the impreſſive one of an ancient conqueſt of Hindoſtan by Oguz Cawn, and recorded by

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by Abulgazi, the Tartar hiſtorian. The ſubject conſidered in a more general point of view — the probable origin of all human ſacrifices, that general belief which prevailed throughout the ancient world in the agency of DEMONS, and in the frantic terrors inſpired by SUPERSTITION — a deſcription, from the Aſiatic Reſearches and Mr. Holwell, of CALLEE, the ſable goddeſs of India, with an accompanying engraving of that formidable divinity, on whoſe baleful altars human victims were accuſtomed to be offered. — Human ſacrifices ſeldom practiſed by the ancients, but in caſes of the greateſt national emergency; as WAR, FAMINE, PESTILENCE, when the nobleſt poſſible victims were ſelected. — The various modes of devoting to death the miſerable victim ſpecified — particularly the more horrid rites uſed by the SCYTHIANS, as deſcribed by Herodotus — decapitation, inhumation, or burning, the general mode adopted in India — an inſtance of the former from the HEETOPADES — human ſacrifices common at the funerals of the ancient ſovereigns of Scythia, or Tartary, and at thoſe of the Indian Rajahs — inſtances of the latter from Texeira, Anciennes Rélations, Tavernier, and Orme's Hiſtorical Fragments. Profound veneration both of the Indians and Scythians for the MANES of their ANCESTORS — exemplified from a paſſage in Herodotus, from another in the SACONTALA, and from Mr. Wilkins's account of the ceremony of the STRADHA in the HEETOPADES.

In the ſecond ſection, relative to the Perſians, the very remarkable ſimilitude ſubſiſting in the leading

principia

principia of the religion of ZOROASTER and BRAHMA, the great legiſlators of the PERSIAN and Indian empires, is pointed out — particularly in their mutual belief in ONE SUPREME PRESIDING DEITY, governing the univerſe by inferior agents, and adored in Perſia under the name of OROMASDES, and, in India, under that of BRAHME — in the parallel powers and ſimilar office of the mediatorial MITHRA and the preſerver VEESHNU — in thoſe of the malignant AHRIMAN and the deſtroying SEEVA — in their account of the conflicts of the good and evil GENII, or DEWTAHS, contending for ſuperiority in the creation — and in their kindred adoration of the SOLAR ORB and of FIRE. A general view of the mythology of the Hindoos, and an enumeration of the deities moſt conſpicuous in that mythology. The SUN and ELEMENTARY FIRE conſidered in both countries as the moſt perfect emblems of Deity. Worſhip paid to the Sun, or SURYA, under the plea of adoring God in that orb, whoſe throne the Perſians ſuppoſed to be ſeated in it, aſſerted to have been in ancient times nearly as general in India as in Perſia — proved to have been ſo from a very great variety of paſſages inſerted in order, and extracted from the VEDAS, the AYEEN AKBERY, and the three principal tranſlations yet made from ancient Sanſcreet writings, viz. the GEETA, the HEETOPADES, and the SACONTALA — the ſect of the ſun-worſhippers at this day called SAURA — the account given, by Philoſtratus, of a moſt ſuperb temple to the Sun — another from the Ayeen Akbery. — The Indian myſterious triliteral word AUM the ſame with the Egyptian

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an OM, and both ufed to fignify the folar fire. — Fire-temples mentioned in the fame book to have flourifhed at Benares, Rai-Jird, and other places, in the time of the fecond Boodh, about a thoufand years before Chrift. — The Moon, or CHANDRA, a male deity in Hindoftan — that very fingular circumftance adduced in proof that India has not borrowed her mythology from Egypt, where the Moon was a female divinity, adored under the name of ISIS, and whence the Greeks had their horned goddefs Io. — The Indian Chandra drawn by antelopes — a RABBIT his fymbol, as the CAT was of the Moon in Egypt, for a curious philofophical reafon adduced from Plutarch. — FOUNTAINS facred to the Moon in India — no lefs than 360 fountains confecrated to that orb at Kehrow, in Cafhmeer — a circumftance pointed out as exceedingly remarkable, being the number of the days of the ancient year. — The two fupreme rajah families of Hindoftan denominated SURYA-BANS and CHANDRA-BANS, or children of the fun and moon. — The elements perfonified and venerated under various names — AGNEE — VARUNA-PAVAN — CREESHNA, the Indian Apollo — CARTICEYA, the Indian Mars — LACHSMEE, the Indian Ceres — SERASWATI, the Indian Minerva — CAMA, the Indian god of love — BHAVANI, the Indian Venus, &c. &c. — From adoring God in the fun, the Orientals proceeded by degrees to worfhip the planetary train — that worfhip promoted by their general cultivation of the fcience of aftronomy. — An enlarged view taken of the ancient SABIAN SUPERSTITION — its rapid progrefs over all the

the East—stigmatized in Job and the prophetic writings.—The rise and progress of astronomy in Asia—pursued with uncommon ardour in India—remains of stupendous astronomical instruments at the observatory of Benares and other places.—The Indians believed the stars to be exactly what the Phoenicians imagined their ZOPHESAMIN to be, ANIMATED INTELLIGENCES—of the former, evidence adduced from the Ayeen Akbery; of the latter, proof brought from Bishop Cumberland's Sanchoniatho.—Their greatest princes, legislators, and heroes, consequently exalted to the skies—representative images formed of them—those images by degrees adored instead of their originals.—Various animals, as their respective symbols, assigned to them by superstition—those animals venerated in their turn.—A retrospective survey of the deities and symbols of Egypt, and a short parallel, preparatory to one more extended, of those deities, and their symbols, with the Indian divinities and symbols.—The bull of OSIRIS—the bull of SEEVA.—SERPENTS sacred in both countries—the EAGLE of JOVE—the GARUDA, or eagle of VEESHNU.—That survey extended to the temples of either country—the similitude astonishing, but reserved for full examination after the caverns of Salsette and Elephanta shall have been described.—The stupendous mysteries of superstition practised in them attempted to be investigated, and the profound arcana taught in them unfolded.—The Author enters upon that task, hitherto unaccomplished, and even unattempted, by the greatest Indian scholars and the most celebrated

celebrated Aſiatic travellers, with diffidence, blended with firmneſs, reſulting from long and elaborate inveſtigation into ſuch books of antiquity as treat of CAVERNS, and ſuch modern publications as beſt deſcribe the GROTTOES of Egypt, the ROCKY SUBTERRANEOUS ſhrines of MITHRA, and the particular caverns in queſtion. — The authors, in this part, more immediately conſulted, are Porphyry, in his very curious and beautiful treatiſe de ANTRO NYMPHARUM; Mr. Norden's Account, and elegant engravings, of the EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES; and Montfaucon and Dr. Hyde on the MITHRATIC CAVES, RITES, and SYMBOLS. — Convinced that the myſtery, conſidered by M. Anquetil Du Perron and M. Niebuhr as inſcrutable, was only to be ſolved by a ſtill cloſer examination of the principles of the ZEND and the VEDAS, by means of Dr. Hyde and Sir William Jones, he attempts to inveſtigate ſtill deeper thoſe ſacred depoſitories of either religion. — He enters with ſome minuteneſs into the hiſtory of Zoroaſter, the REFORMER, not the INVENTOR, of the Magian religion; he traces his "ſecret footſteps," and thoſe of Darius Hyſtaſpes, his royal patron, to the "woody ſolitudes" (as they are expreſsly called by Ammianus Marcellinus) of the venerable BRACHMANS in "Upper India," moſt probably the mountains of NAUGRACUT, and, again following the reformer back to Perſia, after having been inſtructed in the moſt profound and myſterious rites practiſed in their conſecrated caverns, attentively marks his motions, and obſerves his imitative conduct. From the invaluable treatiſe of

of Porphyry above-mentioned, the author is enabled to describe the particular ornaments of that lonely CAVE to which he afterwards retired in Media, " the astronomical symbols, and other mathematical apparatus," with which it was decorated; and, from his reviving, throughout Persia and Media, the veneration for fire, as well as his erecting the stupendous FIRE-TEMPLE at Balk, the author forms those conclusions which are submitted to the reader in the pages more immediately following. — The author supports his deductions, by a very curious passage, given at large by Origen, from Celsus, one of the most learned philosophers among the ancients, concerning the SEVEN GATES, emblematical of the SEVEN PLANETS, erected in the MITHRATIC caverns, through which the sydereal Metempsychosis was performed; and contrasts that passage with others cited from the Ayeen Akbery, in proof that there actually did exist, even so late as in Abul Fazil's time, among the rocky mountains in Upper Hindostan, EXCAVATIONS the most numerous and prodigious, and CARVED IDOLS of the most astonishing fabrication.

A general view is now taken of the sculptured imagery in the caverns of Elephanta, in which are exhibited, as well the substance of all the preceding descriptions, as the respective hypotheses formed from the survey of them by French and English travellers. — Those of Niebuhr by far the most correct and satisfactory — a more particular description of the Elephanta Pagoda; its style of architecture, dimensions, ornaments, recesses, cisterns for the water of purification,

purification, &c. &c. — The ſtupendous figure of the grand Indian triad of Deity, BRAHMA, VEESHNU, and SEEVA, minutely deſcribed, and illuſtrated by an accurate engraving. — The other more remarkable ſtatues ſucceſſively delineated. — Both the figures and their ornamental ſymbols plainly alluſive to the theological notions at this day prevalent among the Hindoos. — The Hindoo nation divided into innumerable ſects, but ultimately branched forth into two principal ones, that of VEESHNU and that of MAHADEO, or SEEVA, *i. e.* the worſhippers of the Deity, in his *preſerving* and his *deſtroying* capacity. — The ſyſtem of religion profeſſed by the former, throughout this Diſſertation, repreſented as the primitive, mild, benevolent, ſyſtem of theology, originally eſtabliſhed in Hindoſtan. — That profeſſed by the latter full of terror, and productive of the moſt licentious practices. — The indecent worſhip of SEEVA, his rites and ſymbols deſcribed with as much delicacy as poſſible, conſiſtently with perſpicuity. The LINGAM ſimilar to the PHALLUS of the Greeks and the PRIAPUS of the Romans. — The ſacred receſs, or Sacellum, of SEEVA. — An extended ſurvey of that curious but degrading ſuperſtition. — The Lingam an emblem, in India, of the creative power — allotted as a ſymbol to Seeva, the DESTRUCTIVE POWER, upon that philoſophical principle of the Brahmins, that " to *deſtroy* is only to *generate* and *re-produce* in another way."

The author now enters on the third ſection, containing the parallel of the INDIAN and EGYPTIAN ſyſtems of theology, in which that baſe ſpecies of

worſhip

worship forms the first distinguishing feature. — A description of the origin of Phallic worship in Egypt, from Diodorous Siculus. — An instance exhibited, from Athenæus, of the splendour displayed at a Phallic festival, celebrated in Egypt by Ptolemy Philadelphus. The same with that of BAAL-PEOR in Scripture. — The Greeks borrowed and infamously refined upon it in their orgies of Bacchus. — the remarkable similitude of a fact recorded in a prophane writer, relative to the introduction of the PHALLICA at Athens, and a circumstance related in Scripture, in regard to the Philistines, who had captured and profaned the ark of God. — The former history in the prophane writer no forgery from the latter, as asserted by Patrick and Bochart; but the mode of punishment and propitiation agreeable to the usage of Eastern countries. — Demonstrated to be so by a passage in Tavernier's Voyages in India; and another in the Sketches of Mr. Crauford. — The Author apologizes for going so largely into so disagreeable a subject; but affirms, that, without the explanation, the Indian system of theology, of which it engrosses so large a portion, would be utterly unintelligible. — He concludes it for the present, since the enormities promoted by the doctrine must be noticed in a succeeding part of the Dissertation, by displaying its atrociousness; and refers back, for the genuine origin of such nefarious rites, to the principles and practices of that vitiated son of NOAH, the earliest idolater of the post-diluvian world, who led the first colony from Chaldæa to the banks of the Nile. — That the most venerated IDOLS

of

of India are the ATTRIBUTES OF GOD perſonified, or RAJAHS exalted, by their piety or bravery, to the rank of divinities, muſt be evident, from the general view of this Pantheon of India; ſince ſuperior power could not be diſplayed in hieroglyphic repreſentation more forcibly, than by *a figure with numerous hands*, nor excelling wiſdom more aptly delineated than by *a circle of beads*; ſince the radiated *crown of glory* naturally points out the *divinity* of the poſſeſſor; and the *ſerpent*, from his great vigour and revireſcence, is equally in Egypt and in India the known emblem of *Deity*.

The Author, continuing the parallel between the theology of India and Egypt, proceeds to examine the more numerous, and ſcarcely leſs aſtoniſhing, excavations and hieroglyphic ſculptures of CANARAH, in the iſland of Salſette — the moſt authentic accounts of them, thoſe inſerted in the ſeventh volume of the Archæologia, and in the preliminary diſcourſe to Mr. Anquetil's Zend-Aveſta — The iſland itſelf and the external appearance of the caverns deſcribed — The rocks themſelves, in which they are hewn, bear ſtrong marks of calcination — Aſſerted by M. Anquetil to be hewn by the chiſſel into a pyramidal form — Pyramids ſo conſtructed to reſemble the figure of a flame of fire — The external figure adduced as probable proof of the ancient internal worſhip — The caverns of Canarah, from their appearance, denominated by the natives "the city of Canarah" — A general deſcription of the caverns — The eminences of the rocks probably uſed by the Brahmins as

observatories — The architecture considered — This pagoda, from its height, and from its arched roof, far more magnificent than that of Elephanta — The tanks for ablution numerous, and the temple of SEEVA, with the PHALLUS, every where discernible — Visible recesses for the lamps that, probably, were kept continually burning — The astonishing height of the GREAT ALTAR, and magnitude of the colossal statues — An attempt to display, in animated language, the stupendous magnificence and splendour of the Mithratic worship — the origin of hieroglyphics — The hieroglyphics of Egypt compared with those of India — The signs of the Indian zodiac still visible on the cornices of the cavern-pagodas — The great similarity, in many points, between the INDIANS and CHINESE — The primeval legislator and, probably, the people of either country originally the same — A MITHRATIC GROTTO discovered in Egypt, and described by M. Savary — A remarkable description, in Ezekiel, of a cavern, supposed by the Author to be Mithratic — or rather the MYSTIC CELL of OSIRIS — Osiris only the African appellative of Mithra — A description of the MENSA ISIACA, or Bembine table, and the hieroglyphics engraved upon it — compared with those in Salsette and Elephanta.

After taking an extensive survey of the growth, progress, and extinction, of the Mithratic devotion, the author proceeds to examine the moral and philosophical doctrines taught by the Brahmans in their cavern-recesses — which immediately leads to the fourth section on the physical and symbolical worship of

of India, and introduces the parallel of the Indian and Greek theology. — The Metempſychoſis the moſt diſtinguiſhed of thoſe doctrines — falſely aſcribed to Pythagoras — originated in India, and firſt promulged in the GEETA of VYASA, the PLATO of India, many centuries before the birth of Pythagoras — extracts from the GEETA in proof of that aſſertion — various paſſages in the SACONTALA and the HEETOPADES, ſtrongly corroborative of it, exhibited in order. — The doctrine of the Metempſychoſis, or the notion of this life being a probationary ſtate, productive in India of the moſt excruciating and horrible penances, in order by thoſe penances to obtain MOKSH, or ſupreme happineſs — A deſcription of a YOGEE, in the act of penance, from the Sacontala — The ſupreme happineſs of BRAHME a ſtate of divine abſorption. — The doctrine of degenerate ſpirits migrating through various BOOBUNS, or ſpheres, and through animal bodies, to be traced to ſome corrupted tradition of the fallen angels — The ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES of Greece, as deſcribed by Jamblicus and Proclus, and detailed by Warburton in the Divine Legation, compared with the myſterious rites practiſed in the caverns of India — The genuine theology of India purer in its principles than any other profeſſed in the world, except the Chriſtian — juſtly ſtated to be ſo by Mr. Haſtings, in his elegant letter to Mr. Nathaniel Smith, prefixed to the Geeta — Some moſt ſublime paſſages produced in proof, from that Epiſode and from a tranſlation of the BHAGAVAT, by Sir William Jones — Certain paſſages in Scripture ſurpriſingly

consonant to these extracts — Whether this might be derived from any possible connection with the Hebrews? — The fact itself, of any general intercourse between the two nations, denied — and the assertions of Postellus, Dr. Hyde, and others, deriving BRAHMA from ABRAHAM, confuted — Hamilton's account of a Jew colony at Cranganore, on the coast of Malabar, detailed and considered — possibly the remains of the ten tribes — The VEDAS, however, written at a period far more ancient than that dispersion, and consequently the primitive uncorrupted religion of Brahma could only be derived to them from NOAH, the MENU of the Sanscreet theologians, or else from his more immediate descendants of the righteous line of Shem, who first settled in India.

The Author returns to the parallel of the MYSTERIES of India and Greece. — However pure the primeval theology of India, like all the systems of religion practised in every nation of the ancient world, it gradually declined in its purity, through the venality, servility, or ambition, of successive priests — Its progress in degeneracy traced from the age of VYASA to the present day — The first cause of that degeneracy stated to be the symbolizing of the ATTRIBUTES of the Deity — in the veneration paid to brave and pious RAJAHS deceased, especially to those in whom the great Indian deity Veeshnu became incarnate — exemplified in the three RAMAS — But, as the *amiable attributes* of God were personified and venerated by the Indians, so was that timid race induced, by terror, to deify the evil dæmons,

and

and their *horrible attributes* — The walls of ELEPHANTA and SALSETTE crowded with images allusive to the majestic attributes of God and the magnified virtues of men — The whole train of false deities likewise introduced into the Grecian mysteries — The caverns of Elephanta and Salsette formed with dark ailes and winding passages, exactly resembling those in the temple of Ceres at Eleusis — The PHALLUS of BACCHUS and the LINGAM of MAHADEO principal objects in the mystic shews — The enormities consequent of the former gross system of worship in Greece and Rome, and of the latter in India, depicted — The former from Herodotus and Livy; the latter from Renaudot and Tavernier — The prostitutions at the temple of the Dea Syria in honour of MYLITTA, similar to those of the WOMEN OF THE IDOL in the pagodas of India — particular account of the education and accomplishments of the latter — The surrounding horrors that enveloped the ASPIRANT, and the final raptures that attended INITIATION, described from Apuleius, Dion Chrysostome, and Plato — Some curious particulars, related by MEURSIUS, in regard to the NUMEROUS ABLUTIONS in the Grecian mysteries, compared with those recounted in the Ayeen Akbery, as necessary to be undergone by the BRAHME CHAREE, or Brahmin of the first degree — Mr. Bryant's assertion, that the rites of ISIS and OSIRIS were originally instituted in memory of the deluge, considered and corroborated, by the similar rites of the Brahmins — The Author pledges himself to prove, that there are

Sanſcreet records of a GENERAL DELUGE in Hindoſtan — The account of the Grecian MYSTERIES concluded, with an enumeration of other parallel circumſtances that took place in the celebration of thoſe in India.

This chapter concludes with an extenſive inquiry into that diſputed topic, who were the fabricators of the caverns of SALSETTE and ELEPHANTA? — Whether the EGYPTIANS? — The ſubterraneous grottoes and caverns of the THEBAIS, with their ſculptures, deſcribed from Pococke, Greaves, Norden, and Savary — Whether the Æthiopians? — An account from Ludolphus of the Æthiopian rock-temples, and their ſculptures — A curious paſſage apparently corroborative of the latter hypotheſis from the ARCHÆOLOGIA — Another remarkable paſſage adduced from Ezekiel, in proof that images reſembling thoſe in the Indian caverns, decked with ſimilar ornaments, and painted with vermilion, were in the moſt ancient periods adored in CHALDÆA — the whole, conſequently, relics of the ancient prevailing SABIAN SUPERSTITION, or WORSHIP OF THE HOST OF HEAVEN, and fabricated by the ancient CUTHITES.

The Author, in the third volume, emerging from the gloom of SUBTERRANEOUS pagodas, introduces his readers into the ſplendid temples that adorn the ſurface of Hindoſtan — their height, extent, and the magnitude of the ſtones with which they are built, ſtupendous — inſtanced in the magnificent portico of CHILLAMBRUM, and the circumference of the walls of SERINGHAM. — The moſt ancient pagodas erected in the form of pyramids, with only one door — and

illuminated

illuminated by lamps kept conſtantly burning—properly compared by MANDELSLO to caves.—The more modern pagodas erected in a better ſtyle of architecture, and richly decorated within with gildings, carved work, and painting—without, entirely covered with ſculptured animals.—The five moſt venerated pagodas of India, *viz.* that of JAGGERNAUT—that of BENARES—that of MATTRA—that of TRIPETTY—and that of SERINGHAM,—ſucceſſively and minutely deſcribed from TAVERNIER and others.—An affecting ſtory relative to the firſt defilement of Seringham by European armies.—The amazing revenues which theſe and other pagodas anciently enjoyed—40,000 ſouls ſupported by the revenues of SERINGHAM alone.—A more accurate ſurvey of their internal ſculptures, and a deſcription of the monſtrous idols adored in them.—EGYPT and INDIA ſeemed to have aſſembled in theſe pagodas the animals deemed more peculiarly ſacred in each country—as, for inſtance, the MEMPHIAN BULL—the RAM, ſacred to JUPITER—and the GOAT, to PAN—are ſeen blended with the APE of RAMA—the RHINOCEROS—and the ELEPHANT.

An extenſive diſquiſition is now entered into on that diſputed point, whether INDIA or EGYPT were the elder empire; and which nation firſt imparted its rites of ſuperſtition to the other?—The opinion of KIRCHER, relative to the ſettling in India of the Egyptian prieſts, driven from their country by the ravages of CAMBYSES, firſt conſidered.—The opinion of KÆMPFER, in regard to the great Indian ſaint BUDDHA SAKIA, (in other words, the god BOODH)—the

 opinion

opinion of both thoſe antiquarians highly probable, and apparently ſupported by that of Sir W. JONES, given in the Aſiatic Reſearches, on the ſubject of BOODH — and on the great reſemblance ſubſiſting both in the name and the worſhip of the Egyptian ISIS and OSIRIS and the Indian ESWARA and ISA. — The reſult of SIR WILLIAM's inquiry concerning a colony of prieſts ſuppoſed to have ſettled at TIRHOOT, in North BAHAR — on the whole, favourable to ſuch a ſuppoſition. — Mr. CHAMBERS's account of the ruins of Mavalipuram — of the SOMMONACODOM, or ſtone-deity of the SIAMESE — and of the ſuperſtition of BOODH.—Additional evidence of an early and familiar intercourſe ſubſiſting between the EGYPTIANS and INDIANS adduced. — The ſtructure of their temples ſimilar in point of maſſy ſolidity, magnitude, and extent. — A curſory compariſon of a few of the principal ſtructures of each country, preparatory to a more extenſive parallel. — Some ſtriking circumſtances of national reſemblance enumerated; as, firſt, in their mutual veneration of the ſacred LOTOS. — A deſcription of that flower from Herodotus, and a late traveller, M. Savary. — Secondly, in their early cultivation of the SUGAR-CANE. — Thirdly, in their ancient, and once univerſal, diet, having conſiſted of VEGETABLES. — Fourthly, in their mutual poſſeſſing a SACRED SACERDOTAL LANGUAGE, called in India the DEVINAGARI. — Fifthly, in the diviſion of the people into TRIBES, or CASTS. — Sixthly, in the numerous ABLUTIONS practiſed by both people. — And, finally, in their univerſal reverence of the COW and the SERPENT. —

The

The temples of Egypt, and their symbolical decorations, largely described from the most authentic and recent travellers.

The Author, in the fourth and fifth volumes, investigates THE MORE PURE AND SUBLIME Theology of India, descended traditionally down to them from the venerable patriarchs, of which the following are the principal outlines:—A REVELATION was vouchsafed by his Creator to man, in a state of innocence in Paradise, concerning his nature, his will, and of the mode by which he would be worshipped. — The Deity not a solitary, occult, and inaccessible, being, but perpetually present with his creatures, and in all his works.—The ancient doctrine of DIVINE EMANATIONS adduced in proof of this assertion — that doctrine, the probable source of all idolatry, since it was God himself that was *first* adored in the SUN, the FIRE, and other elements— remains of this purer primitive theology remarkably apparent amidst a thousand superstitions in India. — General division of the Hindoos into four grand tribes, or casts — the tribe of BRAHMA — the tribe of KEHTREE — the tribe of BICE — the tribe of SOODER — the pure doctrines of Vyasa contained in the Vedas. — The Brahmins alone permitted to read the VEDAS — those Vedas explained to have been originally only three, and denominated the REIG Veda— the YAJUSH Veda—and the SAMAN Veda. —All three comprized under the name RIGYAJUHSAMA — and the fourth, or ATHARVA VEDA, proved from internal evidence to be far more modern. — The English, more than any other European nations, have contributed to

remove

remove the veil that anciently obſcured the genuine religion of Brahma, inculcated in the Vedas, the Geeta, and other Sanſcreet theological treatiſes. — An attempt of the Emperor Akber to penetrate that veil. — The affecting ſtory of FEIZI, and his Brahmin preceptor. — An account of the Sanſcreet language, extracted from Sir William Jones and Mr. Halhed. — The Author next enters upon the diſcuſſion of the PAGAN TRIADS OF DEITY, and particularly of the character and functions of BRAHMA, VEESHNU, and SEEVA, the grand Indian triad, of whom an accurate engraving forms the frontiſpiece of theſe volumes. — Any compariſon of the Indian and Chriſtian TRINITY an inſult to the latter; from the immenſe diſparity of the reſpective characters. — An extenſive ſurvey is now taken of the doctrine of the CHRISTIAN TRINITY. — That doctrine delivered down from the ancient Patriarchs, and diffuſed over the Eaſt, during the migration and diſperſion of their Hebrew poſterity — demonſtrated to be plainly revealed in the Old Teſtament, and to have been believed and taught by the JEWISH RABBI, long previous to the birth of PLATO and the coming of CHRIST. — The true origin of that rancour and contempt with which the Jews are inflamed againſt the MESSIAH unfolded. — Some objections, urged by ſceptical opponents againſt the TRINITY, anſwered. — The Jews pay leſs deference to the WRITTEN than to the ORAL LAW, which they aſſert to have been delivered to Moſes on Sinai. — An hiſtorical account of the celebrated code of Jewiſh traditions collected by Rabbi JUDAH, THE

HOLY,

HOLY, and called THE MISNA.—Of the two TALMUDS of JERUSALEM and BABYLON—and of the two TARGUMS of ONKELOS and JONATHAN.—The former TARGUM the moſt conciſe and pure paraphraſe—the latter more diffuſe, and ſuppoſed to have been interpolated.—A progreſſive view taken of the paſſages in Scripture, eſtabliſhing ſome a PLURALITY, and others ſo expreſs upon the PERSONAL AGENCY and DIVINE ATTRIBUTES of the MIMRA, or LOGOS, and the RUACH HAKKODESH, or HOLY SPIRIT, as plainly to evince a TRINITY of divine HYPOSTASES ſubſiſting in the Godhead.—The preceding quotations illuſtrated, in regard to the OLD Teſtament, by a variety of extracts from the TARGUMS, and corroborated, in regard to the NEW, by an exhibition of ſimilar ſentiments and paſſages in the writings of PHILO-JUDÆUS, JOSEPHUS, and others.—The ſymbols of the Jews illuſtrative of this doctrine conſidered; but particularly the CHERUBIM—with an engraving of the CHERUBIM.—The ſentiments of the ancient Rabbies exhibited.—The manner in which the High Prieſt gave his ſolemn benediction to the people deſcribed, and the form in which he diſpoſed his fingers repreſented by an engraving, copied from Athanaſius Kircher.—The mode in which they deſignated the incommunicable name of JEHOVAH, viz. by THREE JODS and a CIRCLE, emblematical of a TRINITY in Unity—that ſymbol exhibited.—In the ancient myſtical character ſuppoſed, like the DEVINAGARI character of India, to have been revealed BY ANGELS, the JOD, the firſt initial letter of that name, accompanied with

with a TRIANGLE — very remarkable, becauſe, according to Kircher, the EGYPTIAN ſymbol of the Deity, or NUMEN TRIPLEX, was a TRIANGLE. — The three perſons in the DIVINE ESSENCE compared, by thoſe Rabbies, to the three collateral branches of the Hebrew letter SCHIN. — The letter therefore conſpicuouſly engraved on the ancient PHYLACTERY, which the Jews, according to the divine command, wore on the head. — Engravings, diſplaying theſe various ſymbols, in the courſe of the inquiry, preſented to the reader. — An account of the famous book of ZOHAR, and of the SEPHIR JETZIRAH, or book of Abraham. — A review of the Pagan TRINITIES. — The ORACLES of ZOROASTER conſidered — contain internal evidence that they are not wholly ſpurious — that aſſertion proved in a ſhort compariſon of the thoretic ſyſtem of theology laid down in thoſe oracles, and the practical worſhip of the Chaldæans, Perſians, and Indians. — The THREE PRINCIPLES mentioned in the Zoroaſtrian or Chaldaic Oracles, the moſt early corruption of the doctrine of the Hebrew Trinity. — The Perſian Triad of Deity, OROMASDES, MITHRAS, ARIMANIUS; or, rather, the three-fold power of the God MITHRA, thence called TRIPLASIOS, to be referred to the ſame origin. — The remains of this doctrine remarkably apparent in India, not only in the triad BRAHMA, VEESHNU, and SEEVA, but in various ſymbolic characters of that myſtic Triad recapitulated and exhibited. — An account of a medal found in Siberia, on which is engraved the figure of the TRIUNE GOD, accompanied with a deſcription in Tangutian charac-

ters,

ters, explained by Colonel Grant, and with an engraving of it from Parſons's Remains of Japhet. — The Peruvians deſcribed by Acoſta as worſhipping an idol denominated TANGA-TANGA, which they aſſert to mean ONE IN THREE and THREE IN ONE. — A ſhort inquiry entered into, by what channel a doctrine, ſo improbable to have been the fabrication of mere human reaſon, as that of a Trinity in Unity, could be propagated among a nation ſo remote from the Hebrews as the Peruvians. — The great THREE-HEADED IDOL of Japan deſcribed from Kæmpfer — an engraving of that idol from the ſame author. — The Trinity of Egypt conſidered — repreſented by a GLOBE, a WING, and a SERPENT. — Its meaning inveſtigated, and an engraving of it exhibited which was copied from the front of the ruins of LUXOR, by Mr. Norden, in his Antiquities of Egypt. — An account of the TRINITY of divine perſons, in the Hymns attributed to Orpheus. — The doctrines relative to a Trinity taught by PYTHAGORAS, PARMENIDES, and PLATO. — A concluſive retroſpect on the ſubject, and a general recapitulation of the principal arguments adduced in proof of the original poſition, that this doctrine *was* originally revealed from heaven to the anceſtors of the human race, known to the Hebrew patriarchs, and propagated, by themſelves and their poſterity, during their various migrations and diſperſions throughout the world. — A ſummary account of the opinions at preſent entertained by the Jews, relative to the expected advent of the MESSIAH. — Calculations formerly made concerning that event from the courſe

of

of the ſtars. — Thoſe calculations now forbidden by a moſt tremendous imprecation, in the GEMARA, that the bowels of the calculator may burſt aſunder. — The execration, how evaded by ABARBANEL, the great commentator on the Pentateuch. — His own extravagant aſſertions, with reſpect to the conſtellations, and his particular computation of the times of the Meſſiah proved to be falſe, by the event. — The monſtrous conceptions of the modern Jews, relative to the great feaſt at which the ſecond Meſſiah, after the overthrow of the enemies of the Jews, is to entertain the whole aſſembled race of Judah, from Abraham downwards, in the renovated city of Jeruſalem, (according to the Rabbies cited by Baſnage,) with the fleſh of the female LEVIATHAN, ſalted by God from the beginning of time, and preſerved as an exquiſite reliſh for that banquet of his SON. — They are alſo to be regaled with the female BEHEMOTH, which eats the graſs of 1000 mountains in one day, according to Pſalm l. 10; and with the fleſh of the ſtupendous bird *Ziz*, or BARIUCHNE, whoſe extended wings obſcured the ſun. — Wine made of the grapes of Paradiſe, and treaſured in the vault of Adam, alſo reſerved for that feaſt. — The Author apologizes, and gives his reaſons for mentioning theſe rabbinical vagaries, viz. to ſhew their perverſion of Scripture texts, and their ſenſual and carnal notions of what is purely ſpiritual; among which may be numbered, that moſt baleful ſpring of all their calamities, the perſuaſion that the MESSIAH IS YET TO COME, A MIGHTY TEMPORAL PRINCE.

The Author now returns to the inveſtigation of the points remaining to be conſidered in the THEOLOGY of the Brahmins — According to Diodorus Siculus, the ancient Brachmans acknowledged all their civil and eccleſiaſtical inſtitutions to be derived from DIONYSIUS — An inquiry commenced concerning the true INDIAN BACCHUS — The Indians, in their relations to the Greeks, to flatter their conquerors, artfully applied the adventures of their great HERO and GOD RAMA to the Grecian Dionyſius — The true Dionyſius of antiquity aſſerted to be no other than NOAH — and, probably, the firſt perſon who led a colony to India from Armenia, after the flood, was an immediate deſcendant of the more virtuous line of that patriarch, who eſtabliſhed the original, mild, and patriarchal, form of government which originally prevailed in India, and of which many traces to this day remain — The early and acknowledged maturity of the ſciences in India, and other perplexing phænomena relative to that country, attempted to be accounted for, by ſuppoſing, with Mr. Bryant, that colony to have migrated, not from Shinaar, but from Ararat, previous to the erection of Babel and the confuſion of tongues — The CUTHITES ejected by the vengeance of God from SHINAAR, and, defeated by the confederated ſovereigns of the line of Shem, invade India in various directions — from the North by the paſs of Hurdwar — and from the regions on the weſtern frontiers, called from them INDO-SCYTHIA. — The former eſtabliſhed themſelves on the Ganges, and formed that vaſt

Eaſtern

Eaſtern empire ſo celebrated in Sanſcreet hiſtories, of which the city of OWDH was the capital, and the Hindoo god and prophet RAMA, the ſon of CUSH, the firſt potent ſovereign — the latter founded the equally renowned empire of the Weſt, and, poſſibly, the capital of that empire was either HASTINAPOOR, or BRAHMINABAD. — The Author aſſigns his reaſons for adopting this hypotheſis, which are founded on the martial and enterprizing character of the SONS OF HAM — their attachment to the ſacred gloom of CAVERNS — and the acknowledged ſkill in architecture of that race, who erected the ſtupendous pyramids of Egypt — He urges that this hypotheſis accounts for the origin of the TWO GREAT SECTS of India, and their varying theology — for the veneration which the Indians entertain for cows and SERPENTS, the predominant ſuperſtition of Egypt — their adoration of the SOLAR ORB — their worſhip of the PHALLUS — and their ſanguinary ſacrifices of MEN and BEASTS. — The Diſſertations of Sir William Jones, and others, on the Indians, very deciſively point towards ſome ſuch hypotheſis as this — ſince they evince, that, at ſome remote period, there has been a general convulſion in the civil and religious conſtitution of India — that a great and remarkable change has taken place in the manners and opinions of the Hindoos — and ſince the myſtery of the great battle of the MAHABBARAT, in which ſons and brothers fell in a general and promiſcuous carnage, can only be reſolved by ſuch a ſuppoſition — The true character of the venerable

Brachmans

Brachmans of antiquity is finely delineated, and the ſevere tortures are alſo enumerated, which they underwent in their progreſs through the CHAR ASHERUM, or FOUR DEGREES of probation; tortures which they bore with a conſtancy and with a fortitude worthy of a more enlightened religion and more animating rewards.

END OF THE INTRODUCTORY PROSPECTUS OF THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS DISCUSSED IN THE DISSERTATION ON THE THEOLOGY OF HINDOSTAN.

CHAP. I.

CONCERNING THE PHYSICAL AND SYMBOLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT INDIANS; IN WHAT POINTS IT RESEMBLED THAT OF THE SCYTHIANS — THAT OF THE ANCIENT PERSIANS — THAT OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS — AND THAT OF THE EARLY GREEKS.

SECTION I.

Pointing out the Analogy exiſting between the ancient Theology of India and Scythia; particularly in reſpect to the ſuperſtitious Rites practiſed by both Nations in conſecrated Groves and Caverns, and their ſanguinary Sacrifices of Men and Beaſts.

I AM now about to enter upon a ſubject, of which the MAGNITUDE and INTRICACY fill me with awe and apprehenſion. In the comprehenſive view which it is my

 intention

intention to take of this important and disputed topic, the Indian Theology, ſo many various and complicated circumſtances preſs for conſideration, that I am almoſt at a loſs from what point to commence the wide ſurvey. If a leſs degree of order and connection than I could wiſh ſhould appear in my reflections on this head of the RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES, maintained from age to age by the Hindoos, the reader will, I hope, candidly impute the defect to the obſcure, the extenſive, and complex, nature of the ſubject under examination.

During the intercourſe which the ancients maintained with India, by means of the conqueſts of ALEXANDER, and the commerce afterwards carried on with the nations inhabiting the Peninſula, they were able to obtain a partial inſight into their theological inſtitutions, which, as far as known to them, have been faithfully tranſmitted to poſterity, in the writings of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Pliny. Some of the outlines which they have drawn are indeed juſt and ſtriking; but the impenetrable veil, which the craft of the INDIAN as well as of the EGYPTIAN prieſthood had thrown over the more ſolemn myſteries of the religion they profeſſed,

professed, precluded any very intimate acquaintance with its principles. Of the genuine precepts and the more sublime doctrines of BRAHMA, whether considered as a theologist or as a legislator, as they are now known to us through the GEETA and the GENTOO CODE, the ancients were as entirely ignorant as even the European conquerors of India themselves, to their disgrace, continued till the middle of the present century; when Mr. Holwell, Mr. Dow, and, in still more recent periods, Sir William Jones, Mr. Halhed, and Mr. Wilkins, made the most indefatigable and successful efforts to investigate them. To the laborious researches of these gentlemen is the public indebted for all the original knowledge of which they are now in possession, both in regard to the true principles of the theology of the Hindoos contained in the VEDAS,* and the profound wisdom and equity displayed in the code of their laws. The latest information, however, and that on which I shall principally depend, is by far the most authentic; for, to the allegorical system which Mr. Holwell has laboured to establish, there are material objections; and no

* The four sacred volumes of India, so denominated from VEDA, a SANSCREET root, signifying, TO KNOW.

no very great ſtreſs can be laid on any information, relative to that religion, given in the prefatory diſſertation of Mr. Dow, becauſe a very able ſcholar in Sanſcreet literature has proved the ingenious writer's palpable deficiency in the knowledge of thoſe ſacred writings, from his having preſented to the public, as an authentic ſpecimen of the ſeveral VEDAS, four aſhlogues, or ſtanzas, which he affirms have not the leaſt affinity or ſimilitude whatſoever to thoſe books. The truth of this aſſertion, Mr. Halhed * has placed beyond the poſſibility of doubt, by a particular quotation of the firſt of thoſe aſhlogues, with the ſtanzas immediately preceding the ſubſequent, as they ſtand in a collection of Sanſcreet poems, of very ancient date indeed, but totally unconnected with the ſubject of religion. While, however, I am compelled thus early to point out the defects of this writer, it is but juſtice to add, that even Mr. Halhed himſelf has acknowledged, that, in other reſpects, he is "an author of conſiderable merit;" and calls his tranſlation of Feriſhta "an elegant tranſlation." What is moſt worthy

* See Mr. Dow's prefatory Diſſertation to his tranſlation of Feriſhta, vol. i. p. 30, and Mr. Halhed's Preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, p. 32, 4to edition.

worthy of our attention, in the two former of thoſe writers, ſhall be firſt noticed; new rays of light from the pages of the latter will, as we advance, illuminate the ſubject. I think it neceſſary, however, to begin my inquiries at a period far remote from that of their immediate inveſtigation.

The gloomy CAVERN and the conſecrated GROVE bore witneſs to the earlieſt devotions of mankind. The deep ſhade, the ſolemn ſilence, the profound ſolitude, of ſuch places, inſpired the contemplative ſoul with a kind of holy horror, and cheriſhed in it the ſeeds of virtue and religion. The ſame circumſtances were found equally favourable to the propagation of ſcience, and tended to impreſs upon the minds of the hearers the awful dictates of truth and wiſdom. The BRAHMINS of Aſia and the DRUIDS of Europe were therefore conſtantly to be found in the receſſes of the ſacred grotto and in the boſom of the embowering foreſt. Here, undiſturbed, they chanted forth their devout oriſons to their Creator; here they practiſed the ſeverities of bodily mortification; here they taught mankind the vanity of wealth, the folly of power, and the madneſs of ambition. All Aſia beſide cannot boaſt ſuch

auguſt and admirable monuments of antiquity as the caverns of SALSETTE and ELEPHANTA, and the ſculptures that adorn them. I conſider them, not only as ſtupendous ſubterraneous temples of the Deity, but as occaſionally uſed by the Brahmins for inculcating the profoundeſt arcana of thoſe ſciences, for which they were ſo widely celebrated throughout the Eaſt. What were the religious rites practiſed and what the ſciences taught in thoſe caverns, I ſhall reſerve for ample inveſtigation under the ſecond general head. In the mean time it may be obſerved, that, from the deep obſcurity of caverns and foreſts, have, in every age, iſſued the light of philoſophy and the beams of religion. ZOROASTER, or ZERDUSHT, the great reformer of the ſect of the Perſian Magi, between whoſe doctrines and thoſe of BRAHMA I ſhall hereafter, in many points, trace a ſtriking reſemblance, amidſt the gloom of a cavern, compoſed his celebrated ſyſtem of theological inſtitutions, which filled twelve volumes, each conſiſting of a hundred ſkins of vellum, and was called the ZEND-AVESTA.* The renowned philoſophers,

* Dr. Prideaux, who, next to the learned Hyde, has given the moſt ample account of Zoroaſter and his tenets, informs us, that

phers, Epictetus, and Pythagoras, who was himſelf the ſcholar of Zoroaſter,* ſought wiſdom in the ſolitary cell. Even the venerable prophets of the true religion took up their abode in the ſolitudes of the deſert; and the herald of the MESSIAH, whoſe meat was the locuſts and the wild honey which thoſe ſolitudes produced, declares himſelf to be "the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs." In later ages, the crafty impoſtor Mohammed, in order more effectually to eſtabliſh the pretended ſanctity of his character, thought it neceſſary to ſhun the ſociety of men, and retired to fabricate his daring impoſitions in "a lonely cave, amidſt the receſſes of Mount Hara."

GROVES, ſacred to religion and ſcience, were famous over all the Eaſt. Abraham is ſaid to have "planted a *grove* in Beerſhebah, and to have called there upon the name of the Lord."† But his degenerate poſterity afterwards proſtituted the *hallowed grove* to purpoſes of the baſeſt devotion. They were upbraided,

that the word *Zend-aveſta* ſignifies *Fire-kindler.* See Prideaux's Connections, vol. i. p. 317, oct. edit. 1724. See alſo Dr. Hyde, Hiſt. Vet. Relig. Perſ. cap. xxvi. p. 330. Edit. Oxon. 1760.

* Prideaux's Connections, vol. i. p. 224.

† Gen. xxi. verſe 23.

braided, by the prophets, with burning incenſe and offering oblations, under every oak and green tree, to the gods of the Phœnicians and the neighbouring nations. It was againſt the *groves*, polluted by ſuch idolatrous ſacrifices, that the moſt awful anathemas of offended heaven were, in holy writ, perpetually denounced. Amidſt the ardours of a torrid clime, thoſe ſylvan ſolitudes could not fail to afford the moſt grateful retreat; but, according to the united atteſtations of the ancients, their inmoſt receſſes were often polluted by the moſt dreadful rites. The SCYTHIANS, alſo, who never erected temples to the Deity, in their colder regions, celebrated the myſteries of their ſanguinary ſuperſtition under *groves* of oak of aſtoniſhing extent and of the profoundeſt gloom. Some of thoſe oaks, according to Keyſler,* who has diligently inveſtigated the antiquities of that northern race, and traced them among their deſcendants in Europe, were of a prodigious magnitude, and were always plentifully ſprinkled with the blood of the expiring victims. However vaſt the dimenſions of thoſe oaks might have been, it is hardly poſſible they could have exceeded in ſize that wonderful

* See Keyſler's Antiquitates Septentrionales, Diſſert. 3.

wonderful Indian tree under which we are told, by the ancients,* that four hundred horſemen might take ſhelter at once. This was doubtleſs the ſacred BATTA, or banian-tree of the moderns, under the ample ſhade of whoſe radicating branches, Tavernier informs us, that the Hindoos of modern times delight to reſide, to dreſs their victuals and erect their pagods. Of one of this ſpecies, growing near Surat, he has given an engraving,† with a number of FAKEERS, the gymnoſophiſts of the ancients, in every dreadful poſture of penance and diſtortion. The Druids of Gaul and of Mona, the immediate deſcendants of the ancient CELTO-SCYTHIANS, retained the ſame veneration for groves of oak; and, according to the Roman hiſtorians, in the early periods of that empire, practiſed the ſame tremendous ſpecies of ſuperſtition, devoting to the gods, with many horrid ceremonies, the unhappy captives,‡ taken

* …onſult Strabo, lib. xv. p. 659, & Plin. Nat. Hiſt. lib. xii. … regard to the immenſe bulk of the Indian trees, eſpecially …icus Indica.

† … the engraving, Voyage de Tavernier, tom. iv. p. 118, …ouen, 1713, and p. 166 of the London folio edit.

‡ …ma ſeems to be derived *a victo*, the perſon conquered in …d therefore doomed to ſacrifice.

taken in war. Lucan,* deſcribing the Maſſilian grove of the former, enumerates circumſtances which make us ſhudder as we read—the gloomy, damp, impenetrable, grove, where no ſylvan deity ever reſided, no bird ever ſang, no beaſt ever ſlumbered, no gentle zephyr ever played, nor even the lightning could rend a paſſage. It was a place of blood and horror, abounding with altars reeking with the gore of human victims, by which all the trunks of the lofty and eternal oaks, which compoſed it, were dyed of a crimſon colour: a black and turbid water rolled through it in many a winding ſtream: no ſoul ever entered the forlorn abode, except the prieſt, who, at noon and at midnight, with paleneſs on his brow and tremor in his ſtep, went thither to celebrate the horrible myſteries in honour of that terrific deity, whoſe aſpect he dreaded more than death to behold.

That

* Lucus erat, longo nunquam violatus ab ævo,
Obſcurum cingens connexis aëra ramis.—
Hunc non ruricolæ Panes, nemorumque potentes
Sylvani Nymphæque tenent, ſed barbara ritu
Sacra deum, ſtructæ ſacris feralibus aræ;
Omnis et humanis luſtrata cruoribus arbos.
Illis et volucres metuunt inſiſtere ramis,
Et luſtris recubare feræ: nec ventus in illas
Incubuit ſilvas, excuſſaque nubibus atris
Fulgura . . . . .

Lucan's Pharſalia, lib. iii. *p.* 400 *& ſeq.*

That a country, like India, whose JUNGLES, at this period of general cultivation, form in some places an impervious barrier, and whose sages have ever affected both the austerity and seclusion of anchorites, should once have abounded with the noblest groves, calculated for every purpose of superstition as well as instruction, is a supposition neither irrational nor incredible. Indeed many very extensive and beautiful groves * yet remain in Hindostan, though now applied to other purposes. Whatever may have been urged in favour of the high antiquity of BENARES, as the original seat of Hindoo literature and the most favoured residence of the Brahmins, it seems to be a fact, authenticated by the evidence of the Ayeen Akbery,† and corroborated in some degree by the Asiatic Researches,‡ that TIRHOOT, a city situated in the north of Bahar, possesses a prior claim to that honour; for, it is said, "*from old time*, to have been the residence of Hindoo learning;" and those delighful groves of orange-trees mentioned before, which extended no less

* In the SACONTALA, an ancient Indian drama, the Brahmins are represented as residing in the bosom of a deep forest.

† Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 32.

‡ Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 163.

leſs than thirty coſe, might well contribute to render it the Athens of Hindoſtan. It will be remembered, that Birmh-Gaya, a place of worſhip, ſo called from being conſecrated to Brahma, is in that ſubah, and that Mr. Chambers, quoting Feriſhta, ſays, that the province of Bahar was thus denominated, "because it was formerly ſo full of Brahmins, as to be, as it were, one great *ſeminary of learning*," as the word imports. NAUGRACUT, ſituated on the range of mountains of the ſame name, in the north of Lahore, is alſo mentioned, by ancient travellers, as having a celebrated college of Hindoo learning, groves of vaſt extent, and a moſt frequented and ſplendid chapel of Hindoo devotion, the very floor of which, according to Mandelſloe,* was covered with plates of gold. The rites, however, were ſomewhat of a ſanguinary kind; for, to gain the ſmile of MATTA, the monſtrous idol adored there, the infatuated devotees cut out their tongues, which, according to Abul Fazil,† miraculouſly grew again in the ſpace of two or three days.

It has, indeed, been aſſerted, and the aſſertion is ſupported by the evidence of tradition,

* Mandelſloe apud Harris, vol. ii. p. 120.

† Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 133.

dition, that the very early inhabitants of India were neither so gentle in their manners nor so guiltless in their oblations as are the modern, but that they delighted in the effusion of sacrificial blood as much as their progeny abhor and avoid it. It has been asserted, that not only BESTIAL but even HUMAN sacrifices were common among them, and that the vestiges of this sanguinary superstition are still evident in frequent instances of voluntary suicide, and particularly in the inhuman practice, so common throughout India, of women burning themselves with their deceased husbands; a practice, which is still encouraged by the Brahmins, and which all the authority of Mohammedan and European governors cannot effectually check. The truth of this assertion is, indeed, too well authenticated both by ancient and modern writers; and, though Mr. Holwell,* arguing from the general mildness of the Hindoo character, and the benevolent principles of the Brahmin religion, strenuously denies the existence of those bloody rites, yet, unaccountable as it may appear, the VEDAS† themselves enjoin the oblation, on some occasions, of a MAN, a BULL, and a HORSE, under the

* Holwell, part ii. p. 84.

† Asiat. Research. vol. i. p. 265.

the names of NERAMEDHA, GOMEDHA, and ASWAMEDHA. In the Ayeen Akbery,* it is exprefsly faid, that, at a particular period, on account of the number of animals which were at that time facrificed in Juggen, (divine worfhip,) "the Almighty appeared upon earth under a human form, to convince mankind of the wickednefs of that cuftom, and that he lived a hundred years." Strabo,† indeed, and Arrian,‡ unite in affirming, that facrifices of animals were anciently practifed in India, and fpecify both the bull and the horfe, which were obliged to be coal-black, as being of a more rare and valuable kind. The former adds, that the throats of the victims were not cut, for fear of rendering the facrifice imperfect, by fpilling the blood of the animal, but that they were ftrangled. This mode of depriving the animal of life, if we are at all to credit the account, was more probably adopted to avoid the defilement of that blood, but I can by no means find this particular confirmed either in the Afiatic Refearches, which exprefsly fay thefe ceremonies *were ftained with blood*, nor in that part of the Ayeen Akbery, which records

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 241.

† Strabo, lib. xv. p. 710.

‡ Arrian in Indicis.

records the hiſtory of the ſacrificial rites of India. The latter book mentions, in oppoſition to what Strabo aſſerts concerning the coal-black ſteed, that the ASWAMEDHA JUG, or horſe-ſacrifice, was only properly performed when the animal was white, with a *black right ear*; which, however, being an object equally rare, will ſerve to prove the validity of that valuable author's general information.

However incredible to ſome perſons may appear the aſſertion of the moſt ſanguinary rites having been at one time generally practiſed in Hindoſtan, the exiſtence of ſuch rites is rendered exceedingly probable by the following ſhort chapter in the Ayeen Akbery, which Abul Fazil, who had the beſt opportunities of inveſtigating the fact, would not have inſerted unleſs founded in truth. It is entitled,* MERITORIOUS Kinds of SUICIDE. There are five in number, for the choice of the voluntary victim. " 1. Starving. 2. Covering himſelf with cow-dung; ſetting it on fire, and conſuming himſelf therein. 3. Burying himſelf with ſnow. (This practice muſt have been peculiar to the northern regions.) 4. At the extremity of Bengal, where the Ganges diſcharges itſelf into the ſea through a

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 274.

thousand channels, he goes into the water, enumerates his sins, and prays till the alligators come and devour him. 5. Cutting his throat at Allahabad, at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna." The legislator, who could denominate these horrid acts of self-murder *meritorious*, could not be of a very mild or benevolent disposition, but, on the contrary, must have been a gloomy bigot or blood-thirsty tyrant. The sacrifice which CALANUS made of himself, on the funeral pile, before the whole assembled army of Alexander; the similar devotion of himself to the flames, at Athens, of the venerable Brachman ZARMANOCHAGAS, who attended the embassy sent by Porus to Augustus, and whose epitaph, dictated by himself, expressly asserted, that he relinquished life in conformity to a custom prevailing among his countrymen; that, mentioned in a former chapter, of the unsuccessful but warlike sovereign of Lahore; and the authenticated narratives, in times comparatively modern, of the sacrifice or inhumation, together with the corpse of the monarch, of the principal slaves and most beloved women* of the

* Mention is made in Harris's Voyages (vol. i. p. 282) of the death of a king at Tanjore, at whose funeral no less than three hundred of his concubines at once leaped into the flames. Texeira, in

the sovereigns of the Peninsula: these collective considerations incontestably prove how much accustomed the Indians formerly were to the rites of human sacrifices, and in how late periods they continued to practise that enormity, either constrained in regard to others, or voluntary in respect to themselves. The dreadful rite, as a public national sacrifice, ceased, we are told,* when the ninth great incarnation of VEESHNU, in the form of the god BOODH, above-mentioned, took place, about 1000 years before Christ, when that benign and compassionate deity abolished the disgraceful custom, and ordained, in its place, the more simple and innocent oblation of fruits, flowers, and incense.

I am inclined to believe, that both this practice and the barbarous custom, of devoting to death the affectionate wife on the funeral pile of her deceased husband, (doctrines so opposite to the general precepts of Brahma, which cherished in the bosom of his votaries the most enlarged benevolence, and extended that benevolence even to brutes,) derived its

 origin,

in page 9, of his Persian History, declares, that, when he was in India, " four hundred women burned themselves at the funeral of the Naique of Madura."

* Asiat. Research. vol. i. p. 265.

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origin, in part, from ſome early but forgotten connection with the neighbouring ferocious and war-trained tribes of SCYTHIA. I have ventured to differ from Major Rennel, in deriving the national appellation of Cathæi, which the Greeks, doubtleſs from ſome reſembling ſound heard by them, gave to the moſt warlike people of northern India, from Kathay, or, if written Cuthæi, from Scuthe, or Scythe; whereas that gentleman, finding the name written Katheri in Diodorus Siculus, with perhaps greater propriety, would underſtand by them the Kattry, or Raja-pout tribe, and quotes a paſſage from Thevenot in corroboration of the idea. However, his own conjecture, that the tribe of NOMURDY, inhabiting the banks of the Indus, may probably be the deſcendants of the SCYTHIAN NOMADES, and a relation which I find in Abulgazi's Hiſtory * of the Tartars, concerning a very ancient conqueſt of the northern regions of Hindoſtan by OGUS KHAN, one of their moſt early emperors, an account of which will be hereafter given in its proper place, induces me ſtill, with every proper diffidence, to adhere to that opinion. But there anciently exiſted a race of people, who bordered ſtill nearer to the northern frontiers

of

* See Abulgazi's Hiſt. of the Tart. vol. i. p. 17.

of India, and whoſe manners and habits, Herodotus* acquaints us, greatly reſembled thoſe of the Scythians, I mean the MASSAGETÆ, inhabiting, according to Sir W. Jones,† the territory by the moderns called BADAKSHAN, from whoſe primitive practices, however now altogether relinquiſhed, the Indians might have borrowed their leſs humane principles and cuſtoms. I conſider the GETES, upon whom Timur is ſaid to have made war, as the direct deſcendants of this ancient tribe, and am induced to do ſo by Sheriffedin's deſcription of them, as a warlike race of mountaineers.‡ Theſe GETES, Major Rennel,§ if I miſtake not his meaning, ſuppoſes to be the ſame people with the modern JAUTS, who, at this day, make ſo conſpicuous a figure in Hindoſtan. It is not from attachment to ſyſtem, but from a wiſh to vindicate the mild and benevolent progeny of Hindoſtan from the inconſiſtency of a conduct ſo entirely repugnant to their genius, and to the general ſentiments and practice at this day prevailing

 throughout

* Herodotus, lib. i. p. 99, edit. Stephani, 1592, which is the edition quoted throughout this work.

† Deſcription of Aſia, p. 21, prefixed to Nadir Shah.

‡ Life of Timur Bec, vol. ii. p. 46.

§ Major Rennel's Memoir, p. 119, ſecond edition.

throughout the country, except among the war-tribe only, that I have ſo far preſſed this argument, in the hope of inducing a perſuaſion that ſo nefarious a practice might *poſſibly* not have originated among them, but was a dreadful exotic, imported during their connection with their neighbours of the more barbarous north. The ſanguinary uſage might have been univerſally adopted only in times prior to the inſtitution of their firſt great legiſlator, whoſoever, in reality, that legiſlator might have been. If, however, we allow, what, after all, I fear muſt be allowed, that it was preſcribed by MENU himſelf; to avoid abſurdity, we muſt ſuppoſe, that, to prevent too violent a ſhock being given to religious prejudices ſo deeply rooted, or not venturing to run the riſk of aboliſhing at once a cuſtom ſo generally practiſed, he permitted it only on ſome particular emergencies; but, in general, and probably with a view to remove for ever the baneful impreſſion from their minds, throughout his whole voluminous code,* inculcated the moſt beneficent affection to their fellow-creatures; and, to prevent the effuſion

* The four VEDAS together compoſe eleven folio volumes, which are now in the poſſeſſion of Colonel Polier, who was for many years reſident at the court of DELHI.

effuſion of beſtial blood, which we know was ſo prodigally ſhed by the moſt ancient nations, eſtabliſhed the humane but fanciful, and ſince corrupted, doctrine of the Metempſychoſis.

The SCYTHIANS, however, were not their only neighbours who were, in a notorious degree, guilty of the enormity of human ſacrifices. If Herodotus may be credited, (and, concerning theſe remote periods of the world, even Heredotus, the moſt reſpectable hiſtorian of antiquity, or rather the venerable father of all hiſtory, may be ſometimes fallible,) the ancient PERSIANS* ſacrificed human victims; and, in particular, he informs us, that, in the expedition of Xerxes into Greece, arriving at a place in the country of the Edonians, called the Nine Ways, the Magi took *nine* of the ſons and daughters of the inhabitants, and *buried them alive*;† for, he adds, to theſe rites of inhumation the Perſians are accuſtomed. To corroborate the truth of a circumſtance, which he ſuſpected might not be credited by his readers, he, in the very next ſentence, acquaints us, he had heard, that, when Ameſtris, wife of Xerxes, had happily attained to mature age, with confirmed health, ſhe

* Herodoti, lib. vii. p. 477, edit. Steph.

† *Ζώοντας κατώρυσσον.*

ſhe ordered fourteen children of the nobleſt families of Perſia to *be buried alive*, in grateful ſacrifice to the ſubterraneous deity.* This practice, however, was equally contrary to the precepts of Zoroaſter as to the general tenor of the VEDAS. How ſhall we account for its introduction into thoſe nations, or indeed of ſo horrid a rite into any nation? For, in fact, all the moſt ancient nations of the earth practiſed it; the Phœnicians, the Chaldæans, the Egyptians, and, it is too probable, the Jews themſelves, who were forbidden, by the moſt dreadful penalties, to cauſe their ſons and their daughters, like the Chaldæans, to paſs through the fire to Moloch, the Phœnician deity. The abomination deſcended from CAIN, *the firſt murderer*, to all his poſterity; and we muſt conſider the command of Jehovah to Abraham, firſt to ſacrifice his only ſon, and then, by the voice of an angel from heaven, ordering him to forbear and to ſacrifice a RAM in his place, as a ſtrong deciſive mark of his diſapprobation, and as an expreſs prohibition of the continuance among men of ſo nefarious and deteſtable a practice.

The

* Plutarch confirms the ſame fact; but, inſtead of fourteen, ſays Ameſtris offered up the hallowed number of nine victims to Pluto.

The ASWAMEDHA JUG, or horſe-ſacrifice, the Indians, doubtleſs, derived from the Perſians, among whom, according to the whole ſtream of claſſic antiquity, the *horſe* was in a peculiar manner ſacred to the ſun. In their pompous ſacrifices to that deity, a radiant car, glittering with gold and diamonds, and drawn by *white horſes*, in imitation of thoſe ætherial courſers, which they imagined rapidly conveyed the orb of day in its progreſs through the expanſe of heaven, conſtantly formed a part of the proceſſion. It was preceded by a train of led horſes, ſumptuouſly arrayed, and of uncommon beauty and magnitude, who were the deſtined victims of that ſplendid ſuperſtition. The Maſſagetæ, too, that warlike race, who, according to Strabo,* oppoſed the arms of the great Cyrus, adored the SUN, and ſacrificed horſes to that deity. Horſes, however, were not only ſacrificed to the ſun in the ancient æras of the Perſian empire; for, the Perſians (who, according to the more authentic repreſentation of Dr. Hyde, venerated all the elements of nature) paid likewiſe a religious homage to water: and Herodotus, in the page cited before, ſays, that, on the arrival of the army

* Strabo, lib. xi. p. 487, edit. Baſil. The edition referred to throughout.

army at the Strymon, the Magi ſacrificed nine *white horſes* to that river, into which they threw them, with a quantity of rich aromatics. I may in this place remark, that, as there ſeems to be the moſt ſolid ground for ſuppoſing that the Indians owe to their early connection with Perſia their profound reverence for fire, ſo it is not improbable that their veneration for great rivers, as, for inſtance, the Ganges and the Kiſtnah,* whoſe ſtreams they account ſacred, may be derived from the ſame fruitful ſource. I was not able to oblige my readers with any very particular account of the Neramedha, or human ſacrifice, as anciently practiſed in India; (though I ſhall hereafter give an inſtance of one from the HEETOPADES;) but, on that at preſent under conſideration, ſome rays of light have been thrown in a tranſlation by Mr. Halhed from an old Perſian author, who publiſhed in that language a Hindoo commentary upon the Vedas, in which this rite, as a ſymbol, is explained. The whole account is wild and romantic in the extreme, and Mr. Halhed does not abſolutely vouch for its authenticity; however,

* I particularly mention theſe rivers, becauſe two of the moſt conſiderable; but the Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 254, enumerates no leſs than twenty-eight rivers, which are held ſacred by the Hindoos.

however, till more genuine ſources of information are opened to us, we muſt make the moſt of thoſe in our poſſeſſion. The Aſwamedha Jug, we are told in that book, does not merely conſiſt in bringing a horſe and ſacrificing him, but the rite is alſo to be taken in a myſtic ſignification. "The horſe, ſo ſacrificed, is in the place of the ſacrificer, bears his ſins with him into the wilderneſs into which he is turned adrift, (for, from this particular inſtance, it ſeems that the ſacrificing-knife was not always employed,) and becomes the expiatory victim of thoſe ſins." Mr. Halhed obſerves,* that this ceremony reminds us of the ſcape-goat of the children of Iſrael; and, indeed, it is not the only one in which a particular co-incidence between the Hindoo and Moſaic ſyſtems of theology may be traced.

The Ayeen Akbery informs us that the Aſwamedha Jug is performed only by great monarchs previous to their entering upon a war; that he then carries victory wherever he goes; and that whoſoever has performed this ceremony a hundred times will become a monarch in the upper regions. Mr. Wilkins,† commenting upon a paſſage, alluſive to this ſacrifice,

* See the Preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, p. 9.

† Advert to notes on the HEETOPADES, p. 331.

facrifice, in the HEETOPADES, differs from Abul Fazil; for, he fays, that the facrifice of the horfe was, in ancient times, performed by a king at the conclufion of a great war in which he had been victorious.

The GOMEDHA JUG, or facrifice of the bull, they might probably derive from the fame quarter; fince we are told by Xenophon, that the bull in Perfia was likewife facred to the fun. This fpecies of facrifice, however, cannot be eafily reconciled with their prefent enthufiaftic and general attachment to that clafs of animals; fo general and fo enthufiaftic, that, throughout India, to kill one of thefe facred animals, is a crime that can only be expiated by the inftant death of the offender. There is a beautiful engraving taken from an ancient fculpture in marble, and inferted in the curious and valuable collection of Montfaucon,* which is fo highly illuftrative of the Gomedha facrifice, that I cannot refrain from prefenting the reader with a fhort defcription of a part of it, as well as of another or two, in Dr. Hyde's very learned work on the Religion of the Ancient

* See Montfaucon, l'Antiquité expliquée, tome i. p. 373, edit. Paris, 1719. See alfo a fimilar fculpture, engraved in Dr. Hyde's firft plate, with other curious aftronomical appendages, which will be noticed hereafter.

cient Persians, which will still more immediately elucidate the present obscure subject. The reader, who may not have read Dr. Hyde's book, nor be acquainted with the profound and stupendous mysteries of the ancient worship of MITHRA, concerning which I shall have occasion to treat so largely hereafter, will, perhaps, be astonished to hear that the Persians, who were of all nations the most addicted to this species of superstition, chose to perform their adorations to that deity in deep caverns and gloomy recesses. The deeper those caverns, the more gloomy those recesses, to a sublimer point of elevation mounted the zeal of their devotion, and more fervently glowed the never-dying flame of the sacrifice. One reason for adopting a conduct, so apparently incongruous, seems to be, that all the mysteries of religion, celebrated in the ancient world, were performed, as I have expressed myself in another part of this Dissertation, *εν σκοτω και νυκτι*, in the bosom of darkness and in the dead silence of the night. Another reason for performing this worship in caves is given by Lactantius, who, after affirming that the Persians were the first people who worshipped the sun in dens and caves, adds, that they did so *to denote the eclipses of that luminary.*

Around

Around theſe caverns, as will be more extenſively explained hereafter, when I come to deſcribe the myſterious rites, probably celebrated in Salſette and Elephanta, were arranged various ſymbols of the SUN and planetary train, with ſculptures of the animals that compoſed the ſigns of the zodiac, engraved on the lofty walls, and decorating the emboſſed roof. In this artificial planiſphere conſpicuouſly was portrayed the conſtellation of TAURUS, or the bull, and the bas-relief, of which the above-mentioned antiquary has given an engraving, repreſents a perſon in the full vigour of youth, adorned with a kind of tiara, ſuch as were worn by the Mithratic prieſts in the ſacrifices, and with a looſe tunic floating in the air, preſſing to the ground with his knee a ſtruggling BULL, extended beneath him, and, while he holds him muzzled with the left hand, with his right he is in the act of plunging a dagger into his throat. But why, exclaims the Abbé Banier,* whom Warburton (for once juſt to merit) calls the beſt interpreter of the mythology of the ancients, why is MITHRA, under the figure of an active robuſt young man, repreſented in the attitude of ſlaying a BULL, as he appears on all the monuments of the ancients?

* See Banier's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 104.

ancients? In the Abbé's opinion it is a forcible figurative emblem of the renovated warmth and vigour of the SUN, who, having paſſed without heat and ſtrength the cold wintry ſigns, when the ſpring approaches, and he enters into TAURUS, one of the vernal ſigns, ſhines forth in a highly increaſed degree of ſtrength and ſplendor, ſhadowed out under the emblem of cutting the throat of the BULL, one of the ſtrongeſt and fierceſt of animals. The Abbé contends, * that this ſymbolical ſculpture is not a repreſentation of a ſacrifice to the SUN, but only intended as an image of his power in that ſign. As, however, in nearly all the bas-reliefs relative to this worſhip, a ſimilar figure of a young man cutting the throat of a BULL invariably occurs, it moſt probably is alluſive to that ſacrifice: or, ſhall we ſay, that what the Perſians beheld thus ſtrikingly portrayed upon the moſt ancient zodiac in hieroglyphic characters, invented probably by the fathers of mankind to repreſent the power and influence of the SUN in TAURUS, was, in ſucceeding ages, realized by ſervile and infatuated ſuperſtition, and the *ſlaughtered bull* was thenceforth eſteemed a grateful ſacrifice to

* Banier's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 104.

to the SUN, when they hailed his return to the vernal conſtellations, and invoked.

—————————— PERSEI ſub rupibus ANTRI,
Indignata ſequi torquentem cornua MITHRAM.*

The general meaning of Statius, with the reader's permiſſion, I ſhall venture to give in the following paraphraſe.

In Perſia's hallow'd caves, the LORD OF DAY
Pours through the central gloom his fervid ray;
High wrought in burniſh'd gold the zodiac ſhines,
And MITHRA toils through all the blazing ſigns.
See, riſing pale from winter's drear domain,
The radiant youth reſumes his vernal reign:
With ſinewy arm reluctant TAURUS tames,
Beams with new grace, and darts ſeverer flames.

Although I profeſs to give the deſcription only of the principal figure in this ſculpture, yet it ought by no means to be omitted, that, on the right ſide of this monument, ſtand two youths, with ſimilar habits and tiaras, holding each a torch; the one raiſed aloft and blazing in full ſplendor; the other, with the lighted end directed downwards to the earth, and faintly glimmering. Theſe expreſſive figures, as ſeems to be univerſally agreed among antiquaries, repreſent, the former the *riſing*, the latter

* Statii Thebais, lib. i.

latter the *ſetting*, SUN; though, ſince it was the object of the ſculptor to portray Mithra in his full ſplendor only, I ſhould conceive they were rather intended for ſymbols of the *morning* and the *evening* ſtar.

There is another forcible reaſon that inclines me to think this action of cutting the throat of the bull alluſive to a real ſacrifice, which is, that, in one of the other bas-reliefs, I mean that of the VILLA-BORGHESA, (and all of theſe antique ſculptures, dug up in Italy, are, doubtleſs, only imitations of thoſe found in Perſia and Media by the Romans, who originally introduced into Italy the myſterious rites of Mithra,) upon the thigh of the ſlaughtered animal there is this inſcription, SOLI DEO INVICTO MITHRÆ; which ſeems indiſputably to allude to the circumſtance of the oblation. As to the other inſcription, NAMA SABASIO, which appears upon the neck of the animal, juſt above the part into which the dagger is plunged, and which, the Abbé ſays, has perplexed all the antiquaries; the meaning will appear very evident, when we conſider that NAMA may poſſibly be an appellative, and that SABA means *the hoſt of heaven*.

In the celebrated work of Hyde there are two other plates, peculiarly illuſtrative of the

rites and ſymbols of the Mithratic religion. The former, facing page 111, exhibits, in as many different compartments, no leſs than four ſtriking emblematical portraits of Mithra, and the bull ſacred to him; but the one, which I wiſh particularly to point out to the reader's notice, is that in which an elevated figure, decorated with a high tiara, ſtands erect upon the ſame animal, with one foot placed upon his head and the other centred upon his back: his right hand graſps a *dagger*, his left ſupports a *globe*.* Theſe ſymbols diſplay, at once, the power of the God, and the extent of that power. The poſition of his feet on the head and back of the bull, and the perpetual recurrence of that animal itſelf in the attitude of proſtration upon all theſe bas-reliefs, plainly manifeſt, that the bull was not leſs than the horſe ſacred to the ſun in Perſia, and from what ſource the GOMEDHA JUG of India, in all probability, originated. On either ſide of this figure, likewiſe, are ſeen the youths with their torches, who repreſent the *morning* and the *evening* ſtar, but with this difference, that, whereas both are in the former table ſtanding, in the latter table, the figure with the

* Vide Hyde, de Religione veterum Perſarum, p. 111 and 113, edit. Oxon, 1760, ubi etiam ſupra.

the uplifted flaming torch is alone in a ſtanding poſture, while the figure, with the torch juſt ready to be extinguiſhed, is beautifully repreſented ſitting in a melancholy attitude, as if overwhelmed with anguiſh for the loſs of his expiring light, and that the world was going to be wrapped in nocturnal clouds and incumbent darkneſs. In the ſecond plate of the ſame book, there is an engraving of *Taurus geſtans Solem*, that is, of the SUN riſing on the back of the BULL, which, Hyde informs us, is a device very common on the coins of the MOGUL EMPERORS OF INDIA. The reader will perhaps be pleaſed to ſee his words at length: *Sic nempe pinguntur ſigna: adeo ut in dicto iconiſmo exhibeatur* SOL *in ſigno* TAURI, *Perſarum more deſignatus. Sic etiam in nummis* MAGNI MOGUL IMPERATORIS INDIÆ, *exhibitur corpus ſolare ſuper dorſo tauri, aut leonis, qui illud eodum modo geſtat. Nam ſol videtur portari et circumduci ſuper* 12 *zodiacalia ſymbola, dum ſingula dodecatemoria percurrit.*

But, to return to the ſubject of the ancient ſanguinary ſacrifices in India, of which, however unaccountable, this of the bull was one, though in the preſent age forbidden. They conſtitute a feature of national cha-

racter ſo directly oppoſite to that of the modern Indians, who, according to Mr. Orme, the trueſt delineator of that character, *ſhudder at the very ſight of blood*, who are totally ignorant of one great branch of medical ſcience, becauſe *anatomical diſſections* are repugnant to their religion, and who, in the opinion of the ſame writer, are at this day the moſt puſillanimous and enervated inhabitants of the globe;* that on this review it is impoſſible to refrain from a high degree of aſtoniſhment; and, ſince the ſubject is equally curious and profound, it is my intention not to paſs it ſlightly over, but to give it a diſcuſſion in ſome degree proportionate to its importance. The object then of our inquiry is, of what nature and origin were the vindictive deities, whoſe implacable fury exacted, from the benignant Hindoo, rites from which his nature ſeems to have been ſo abhorrent? Let us explore the latent ſources of this wonderful and complicated ſuperſtition.

From the earlieſt periods of time, among all idolatrous nations of antiquity, a conſtant and uniform belief prevailed of the agency of intellectual beings in the government of the world. They ſuppoſed the whole compaſs of

* See Orme's Hiſt. of Indoſt. vol. i. p. 5, firſt edition.

of creation to be animated with thofe imaginary beings, affigning to fome an elevated ftation in the celeftial orbs; to others a refidence in the elements of nature; while others again had more particularly in charge the management of this terreftrial globe, and fuperintended the concerns of mortals. But as they imagined there were good fpirits, or *αγαθοδαιμονες*, whofe office was of this protecting and benevolent kind, fo they alfo believed in the exiftence of beings of a very contrary nature and difpofition, or *κακοδαιμονες*, whofe conftant employment and whofe infernal delight it was to derange the beautiful order and harmony of nature, and to fpread defolation through the works of God. I fay *the works of God*; becaufe there hardly ever exifted a nation, notwithftanding the reprefentation of Sanchoniatho, and other writers of that clafs, who did not believe in one grand original prefiding Deity, but whom they fuppofed to be infinitely removed from the material univerfe which he had formed, and to govern that univerfe by celeftial agents. The Indians, in particular, are to this day of opinion that the fupreme felicity of the Deity confifts in a ftate of divine abforption in the contemplation of his own wonder-

ful perfections; but ſtill they imagine that his ſpirit intimately pervades every part of the creation. Theſe good and evil Genii, or, as they are called in the language of Hindoſtan, the DEOS, or DEWTAHS, are repreſented as eternally contending together; and the inceſſant conflicts, that exiſted between them, filled creation with uproar, and all its ſubordinate claſſes with diſmay. The ancient Perſians, according to Dr. Hyde,* affirmed, that there were two mighty predominant principles in nature; the firſt they denominated ORMUZD, or OROMASDES, the ſuperior and benevolent being; the ſecond they ſtyled AHRIMAN, or the inferior and malignant being. MITHRA ſeems to have been the middle and mediatorial character, the oſtenſible agent of the eternal beneficence, and, in the ORACLES OF ZOROASTER, is called THE SECOND MIND. Oromaſdes is repreſented as reigning from all eternity; Mithra is deſcribed as a being formed of a nature and with powers only not INFINITE; Ahriman exiſted by ſufferance only from the SUPREME, during that period, and for thoſe purpoſes which his mind had reſolved on. While the good ſpirits, appointed by Oromaſdes,

* Hiſt. Relig. vet. Perſ. c. ix. p. 160, edit. Oxon. 1760.

mafdes, under the direction of MITHRA, to fuperintend the affairs of the univerfe, were employed in acts of perpetual kindnefs and guardian love to mankind, the agents of Ahriman endeavoured, by every poffible means, to thwart their benign intentions, and plotted the moft baneful fchemes for their moleftation and ruin. Correfpondent to the vaft powers which they poffeffed were the tremendous conflicts in which they engaged. All nature was convulfed by the violence and continuance of thofe conflicts, and the terrified human race refigned themfelves to the impulfes of that fuperftitious dread and horror, with which they were overwhelmed.

If the Perfian and the Hindoo legiflator were not in reality the fame perfon, which I ftrongly fufpect they were, under two diftinct appellations, it muft be owned that the principles of their theology are wonderfully fimilar. BRAHME, THE GREAT ONE, is the fupreme eternal uncreated God of the Hindoos. BRAHMA, the firft created being, by whom he made and governs the world, is the prince of the beneficent fpirits. He is affifted by VEESHNU, the great PRESERVER of men, who has nine feveral times ap-

peared upon earth, and under a human form, for the moſt amiable and beneficent purpoſes. Veeſhnu is often called CREESHNA, the Indian Apollo, and in character greatly reſembles the MITHRA of Perſia; the prince of the benevolent Dewtah has a ſecond coadjutor in MAHADEO, or the DESTROYING POWER OF GOD; and theſe three celeſtial beings, or, to ſpeak more correctly, this threefold divinity, armed with the terrors of Almighty power, purſue, throughout the extent of creation, the rebellious Dewtahs, headed by MAHASOOR,* the GREAT MALIGNANT SPIRIT who ſeduced them, and dart upon their flying bands the AGNYASTRA,† or fiery ſhafts of divine vengeance.

The policy of legiſlators and the deſpotiſm of princes have never obtained a ſurer hold of the mind of man, or ſecured his obedience more firmly, than when they have employed for that purpoſe the fetters of ſuperſtition. To minds, ſo deeply impreſſed with an idea of the agency of inviſible

* Mr. Holwell, whom I, in part, follow here, writes this word MOISASOR; but I have taken the liberty to alter it, according to Mr. Wilkins's orthography in the Geeta, to MAHASOOR, that is, the great Aſoor, or evil ſpirit.

† Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 264.

visible beings as were those of the Persians and the Indians, few legal terrors were wanted to enforce the most abject submission to the mandates of their governors. Hence the rigid adherence of the PERSEES, that exiled and persecuted sect, to their ancient rites, and hence that inviolable fidelity to their tenets which distinguishes the undeviating INDIANS. On this account it was, that Darius Hystaspes so ardently espoused the cause and principles of Zoroaster, that at his death he ordered himself to be enrolled the Archimagus, or chief of the magi; and from this cause, probably, it has arisen that the rajahs of India have ever submitted, without a murmur, to the assumed consequence and arrogated superiority of the priests of BRAHMA.

The more timid Indian multiplied, without number, the gods of his disturbed imagination. The lightning that blasted the grove or shivered the cavern in which he performed his devotion, the furious tempest that battered to pieces his cany habitation, and, at the period of the MONSOONS, ravaged the shores of the Peninsula, appeared to him as if directed by the invisible hand of some enraged dæmon. If the fields, scorched by the beam of a direct sun, and sterile from a

defect

defect in the annual inundations, denied their accustomed produce of rice, his innocent and only food; if the TANK, that abundant source of health and felicity, which rolled through his garden a thousand fertilizing streams, and which was so necessary to himself in the performance of a thousand pious ablutions, denied the necessary tribute of its water; FAMINE was, by his fears, magnified into a dæmon of haggard look and gigantic form, and the affrighted bigot resorted to what he supposed to be the surest means of propitiation. On these emergencies, whether of national distress or of domestic calamity, he hastened, like the Persian, to that SACRED FIRE, which he, with equal zeal, preserved from extinction; he performed, with trembling, the various prescribed ceremonies of the POOJA;* and, while his heart glowed with gratitude for favours received from the protecting Dewtah, he neglected not to deprecate the vengeance of the malignant dæmon by oblations suited to the ferocity of his character. Agonizing under the torments of superstitious terror, his blood stagnant with holy horror at the recollection of

* POOJA signifies *worship*: see the various kinds of POOJA described in the Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 226.

of the paſt or the dread of the future, he thought no offering too coſtly, no victim too precious. As the ſtern injunction of the Deity was explained by the barbarous prieſt, the child of his affection or the wife of his boſom alternately expired on altars reeking with human ſacrifice. Hence, in the SACONTALA,* the epithet of *blood-thirſty* is frequently applied to the evil dæmon. If the offender happened to be of elevated rank or of diſtinguiſhed fortune, the penalty of life was ſometimes remitted, and the Brahmin pronounced that the divinity might be appeaſed by a leſs barbarous oblation. In that caſe, the half of his poſſeſſions was brought to the foot of the altar, and the treaſures, thus extorted, were devoted to ſwell the immenſe revenues of the temple, and to gratify the inſatiable avarice of the prieſt. It is affirmed, in the HEETOPADES,† that, "without the Brahmins rites, a ſacrifice is ſmitten;" that is, with a curſe.

Proportionate to the boon which he wiſhed to obtain, or to the evil which he laboured to avert, was the largeſs the ſacrificer beſtowed. No leſs than ſixteen various kinds of ſacrifice, all of gold and precious ſtones, each riſing

* Sacontala, pages 82 & 83. † Heetopades, p. 11.

riſing above the other in value, are enumerated in the Ayeen Akbery.* Some of the articles thus enumerated are exceedingly curious, and among them are " the amount of the ſacrificer's own weight, againſt gold, ſilver, &c. golden horſes, golden cows, trees and vines of gold, ploughs of gold, chariots drawn by horſes and elephants, all of gold." The value of theſe offerings varies from 10 to 6660 tolahs. The tolah, we are informed by Tavernier,† a merchant in gold and jewels, is a weight peculiarly appropriated, throughout the Mogul empire, to thoſe precious commodities, and, according to that author, a hundred tolahs amount to thirty-eight ounces. Theſe were probably, in time, ſubſtituted in the place of ſanguinary oblations, and, from their vaſt amount, ſeem to carry evident proof that India was formerly much more abundant in wealth than in periods leſs recent. Indeed the hiſtorians of Mahmud Gaznavi ſtrongly countenance this idea, ſince they are quite extravagant in their account of the wealth found by him in that country. One of them, quoted by Mr. Orme,‡ aſſerts that he found a tree growing out

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 229. † Indian Travels, lib. i. c. 2.

‡ Orme's Indoſtan, vol. i. p. 9, firſt edition.

out of the earth to an enormous ſize, of which the ſubſtance was pure gold, and this the effect of nature: thus realizing Milton's fable * of "ambroſial fruits and vegetable gold." Their offerings of a leſs ſplendid and oſtentatious kind are innumerable; conſiſting, for the moſt part, of rice, flowers, fruits, ſweet-meats, cuſa-graſs, cow's milk, and clarified butter. In the Sacontala † Eendra is more than once denominated "the god with a hundred ſacrifices."

I have both heard and read ſo many attempts to *confute* and even to *ridicule* the aſſertion here made, that the altars of India were once STAINED WITH HUMAN BLOOD, that I could wiſh to place the diſputed ſubject beyond the poſſibility of future controverſy. No fact can be more certainly demonſtrated, if we allow the two beſt Sanſcreet ſcholars of Europe, Sir W. Jones and Mr. Wilkins, to be adequate authorities for determining the queſtion. The name of the black goddeſs, to whom theſe human ſacrifices were offered, was NAREDA, or CALLEE, who is exhibited, in the Indian temples ſacred to her worſhip, with a collar, not compoſed, like that of the benign deities, of a ſplendid

aſſemblage

* Paradiſe Loſt.

† Sacontala, p. 83.

assemblage of the richest gems, but of GOLDEN SKULLS, descriptive of the dreadful rites in which she took so gloomy a delight. "To her," says Sir W. Jones, "human sacrifices were anciently offered as the VEDAS enjoined, but, in the present age, they are absolutely prohibited, as are also the sacrifices of bulls and horses." This observation is accompanied with an engraving of Nareda, in the Asiatic Researches,* sufficiently savage and picturesque. Both the text of the Heetopades,† and Mr. Wilkins's explanatory notes, decidedly corroborate this assertion. "That most beautiful if not most ancient collection of apologues in the world" records, under the veil of a fable, an instance of a father's sacrificing his son, to avert a dreadful calamity with which the kingdom of India was threatened by the intended flight of its guardian genius. The cruel goddess had informed him, that the offering up of that son, to the Power who presides over nature, should secure the prosperity of the reigning king and the salvation of the empire. The father relates to his son the dreadful tidings, who cheerfully consents to be sacrificed

* Asiat. Research. vol. i. p. 265.

† Heetopades, p. 212, and note 292.

ſacrificed for the preſervation of a great kingdom and its monarch. They approach the altar, and, when they have worſhipped the image, " O goddeſs!" exclaims the ſacrificer, " let SOOBHRAKA, our ſovereign, be proſperous! and let this victim be accepted!" Saying this, he cut off his ſon's head. The goddeſs, to whom this offering was made, we are informed by Mr. Wilkins,* " was Callee, (a name derived from Cala, Time,) and it was to her that human ſacrifices were wont to be offered to avert any threatened evil." In another fable,† a female obſerves: " My huſband, if he chooſes, *can ſell me to the gods*, or give me to the Brahmins," which the tranſlator interprets, as referring to the " Naramedha, or human ſacrifice, not uncommon in the earlier ages." This angry deity is now propitiated by a ſacrifice of kids and young buffaloes; ſo that at this day the veſtige of blood remains.

It has been before remarked, that Mr. Holwell ſtrenuouſly denies the exiſtence of theſe bloody rites in India: whereas, in fact, his whole relation, in regard to this fable perſonage, tends in the ſtrongeſt manner to eſtabliſh our belief of the general prevalence of

* Heetopades, p. 212, and note 292. † Ibid. p. 185, note 249.

of this dreadful ſuperſtition throughout that country in very remote æras. He tells us, that an ancient pagoda, dedicated to this terrible divinity, ſtands about three miles ſouth of Calcutta, cloſe to a ſmall brook, which the Brahmins believe to have been the original courſe of the Ganges; that, from her name of Callee, the place itſelf is called Callee Ghat; that her *faſt* falls on the laſt day of the moon in September, and that ſhe is worſhipped *all the night of that day univerſally*; but more particularly at Callee Ghat abovementioned; that different parts of this Gentoo goddeſs are adored in different places of Hindoſtan, her eyes at Callee Ghat, her head at Benares, her hand at Bindoobund, &c. that ſhe takes her name from her uſual habiliment, which is *black*, and is frequently called the BLACK GODDESS, Callee being the common name for *ink.** On this *faſt* alſo, he obſerves, worſhip and offerings are paid to the *manes* of *deceaſed anceſtors*. The origin of this ſingular deity is perfectly in uniſon with her life and hiſtory. Arrayed in complete armour, ſhe ſprang from the eye of the dreadful war-bred goddeſs Durga, the vanquiſher

* See Holwell, part ii. p. 131, and the engraving of Callee, which cannot fail of exciting diſguſt and horror in the reader.

vanquiſher of dæmons and giants at the very inſtant that ſhe was ſinking under their united aſſault; when Callee, joining her extraordinary powers to thoſe of her parent, they renew the combat, and rout their foes with great and undiſtinguiſhed ſlaughter. I cannot refrain from adding in this place, in corroboration of a former remark, that, according to Herodotus, the principal and favourite deity of the Scythians was a war-divinity, to whom that hiſtorian gives the appellation of Mars. To this deity they erected, in every precinct, a vaſt quadrangular altar, ſo vaſt as to cover three ſtades of land, conſiſting of an immenſe pile of wood collected into bundles; and, upon the top of this altar, they placed a ruſty ſcimitar of iron, deeply crimſoned with the blood of the victims, as an emblem of their ſavage divinity and of their no leſs ſavage rites.* Callee, we ſee, was born in *battle*, and from her birth inured to ſcenes of *carnage* and *death*; and it is deſerving of notice that the youth, ſaid to have been ſacrificed by his father in the fable of the Heetopades juſt cited, was of the Katteri, or war-tribe, and makes uſe of this remarkable expreſſion,

* Herodoti, lib. iv. p. 276.

" that it was a ſaying which particularly belonged to that tribe, that, on ſome diſtinguiſhed occaſions, human ſacrifices were proper."

The ancients indeed ſeldom ſacrificed men, except at ſome grand and awful criſis, when a nation was convulſed by the violence of earthquakes, or deſolated by the rage of peſtilence; in ſeaſons of gloomy deſpondency, or in the exulting moment of ſucceſs and triumph. The deeper the diſtreſs, or the brighter the triumph, the more diſtinguiſhed, by birth and accompliſhments, were obliged to be the objects ſelected for ſacrifice. Neither the tendereſt youth nor the lovelieſt beauty was ſpared; the prieſt ſometimes expired by the wound of the immolating knife, and kings themſelves were ſacrificed for the welfare of their ſubjects. It muſt ſtill, however, be owned that the altars of Diana in the Tauric Scythia, and, in Egypt, the more gloomy altars of Buſiris, *(triſtes Buſiridis aræ,)* and ſome others in the ancient world, were proverbially infamous for the profuſion of human blood by which they were contaminated. The mode of devoting to death the miſerable victims was various. Some of them were ſtrangled, and ſo immediately put out of

their

their torture: others had the ſkull ſhattered by the violent blow of a mallet from the muſcular arm of the prieſt: others were ſtretched on the back, and had the breaſt laid bare by the ſtroke of a ſabre, while the unfeeling VATES ſtood round, watching the tremulous motion of the convulſed limbs, and drawing cruel preſages from the ſtreaming of the vital fluid. The moſt dreadful and diſguſting of all was that adopted by the Scythians, and deſcribed perhaps with aggravation by Herodotus.* "They ſacrifice," ſays that hiſtorian, "every hundredth man of their priſoners to the deity. They firſt pour libations of wine upon the head of the victim; they then cut his throat, extended over a chalice to receive the blood; they afterwards aſcend the pile of faggots, and waſh with the blood the erected ſcimitar, the emblem of the god. While this is performing by the prieſts above, thoſe below, after having deprived the wretched ſufferer of life, with the ſacrificial knife ſeparate the right arm from the ſhoulder, which they hurl into the air, and leave the body to putrify upon the ground." It appears, however, as if the victim in India generally periſhed

* Herodoti, lib. iv. p. 277.

by fire, or decapitation, or perhaps, I may add, *inhumation*; for, that they were no ſtrangers to that practice, is evident from two figures exhibited in Mr. Niebuhr's ſeventh plate, the heads of which alone are apparent, the bodies being *interred* quite up to the throat, and a rajah appearing in the ſculptures above, as if ſitting in judgment upon the criminals.

The doctrine of the Metempſychoſis, originally intended to act as a check upon this barbarous propenſity, in time became baſely perverted, and operated as a powerful incentive towards the continuance of theſe rites of human ſacrifice, diſarming anguiſh of its ſting and the grave of its horrors. The Indians ſeem, like the Scythians, to have thought, that, in the future ſtate, the ſplendour of retinue and the tender offices of domeſtic affection were abſolutely neceſſary to the happineſs of the deceaſed. The account which Texeira gives of ſo many women and ſlaves burning themſelves with their lord, the Naique or Viceroy of Madura, is confirmed in a great degree by what Mr. Orme,* in his Hiſtorical Fragments, reports, that with Seevajee's corpſe were burnt attendants, animals, and wives. Marco Polo informs us, that, in the iſland of Ceylon,

* See Orme's Hiſtorical Fragments of the Mogul Empire, p. 126.

Ceylon, a number of perfons of quality, ftyling themfelves "faithful to the king in this world and in the next," were accuftomed to deftroy themfelves when he died. In Tonquin, according to Tavernier, "many lords of the court are buried alive with their fovereign;" and Barbofa, who, with the two preceding authors, is quoted by M. Renaudot in the Anciennes Rélations* in proof of the fact which I am labouring to eftablifh beyond difpute, afferts that in the Indies, particularly among the Naires, it was a cuftom for the great men in the pay of the king, when he died or fell in battle, to feek death by revenging his fall, or to lay violent hands upon themfelves in order *to bear him company*. At the death of the Scythian monarch, we read in Herodotus,† that the principal officers of his household were ftrangled together with many fine horfes, and in his tomb were depofited golden goblets, and other neceffary domeftic utenfils, for his ufe in the other world.

The laft refembling cuftom which I fhall notice between the Scythian and Indian nations, was their great veneration for the me-

* See Anciennes Rélations, firft part, in note z. p. 33, of the Englifh edition.

† Herodoti, lib. iv. p. 70.

mory of their anceſtors. When upbraided by Darius for flying before his army, the former exclaim, " Purſue us to the ſepulchres of our anceſtors, and attempt to violate their hallowed remains, and you ſhall ſoon find with what deſperate valour the Scythians can fight." The Indians, we learn from Mr. Holwell, have ſo profound a veneration for the aſhes of their progenitors, that, on the faſt of Callee, worſhip and offerings are paid to their *manes*, and Mr. Wilkins, in a note upon the Heetopades, favours us with additional information,* that the offerings conſiſted of conſecrated cakes, that the ceremony itſelf is denominated STRADHA, and that a Hindoo's hopes of happineſs after death greatly depend upon his having children to perform this ceremony, by which he expects that his ſoul will be releaſed from the torments of NARAKA, or hell. In his ſixth note upon the text of the GEETA, his account of this ceremony is ſtill more ample; for, in that note, he acquaints us that the Hindoos are enjoined, by the Vedas, to offer theſe cakes to the ghoſts of their anceſtors as far back as the third generation; that this greater ceremony of the Stradha is performed on the day of the new moon in every month, but that they

* Heetopades, p. 271, and note 372.

they are commanded by thofe books daily to propitiate them, by an offering of water, which is called Tarpan; a word fignifying *to fatisfy, to appeafe*. A fpeech of the Indian emperor Dufhmanta, in the Sacontala, remarkably exemplifies this obfervation of Mr. Wilkins. That emperor, ftruck with horror at the idea of dying childlefs, exclaims, "Ah me! the departed fouls of my anceftors, who claim a fhare in the funeral cake, which I have no fon to offer, are apprehenfive of lofing their due honour, when Dufhmanta fhall be no more on earth:—who, then, alas! will perform in our family thofe obfequies which the Vedas prefcribe?—My forefathers muft drink, inftead of a pure libation, this flood of tears, the only offering which a man who dies childlefs can make them." Mr. Wilkins judicioufly remarks that thefe ceremonies were not unknown to the Greeks and Romans, in proof of which, if neceffary, many inftances might be brought from claffical writers.

SECTION II.

Commences with a general View of the Indian Mythology, and displays the Analogy subsisting between the ancient Religion of INDIA *and* PERSIA, *particularly in their universal and enthusiastic Veneration of the Solar Orb and Elementary Fire.—The Indians sacrifice to the* MOON *under the Character of a Male Divinity.—An extensive Review taken of the* SABIAN SUPERSTITION, *or Worship of the Host of Heaven, in the earliest Ages of the World.—The Souls of deceased Heroes elevated to the Stars, and adored as the Genii of the revolving Orbs.—The Persian Theology resumed.—The Laws of the Persian Zoroaster and Brahma have a wonderful Feature of Resemblance.—The Race originally the same, and probably the Legislators not different.—The Antiquity of the Four* VEDAS, *or Sacred Books of India, examined.—Historical Observations relative to Zoroaster,*

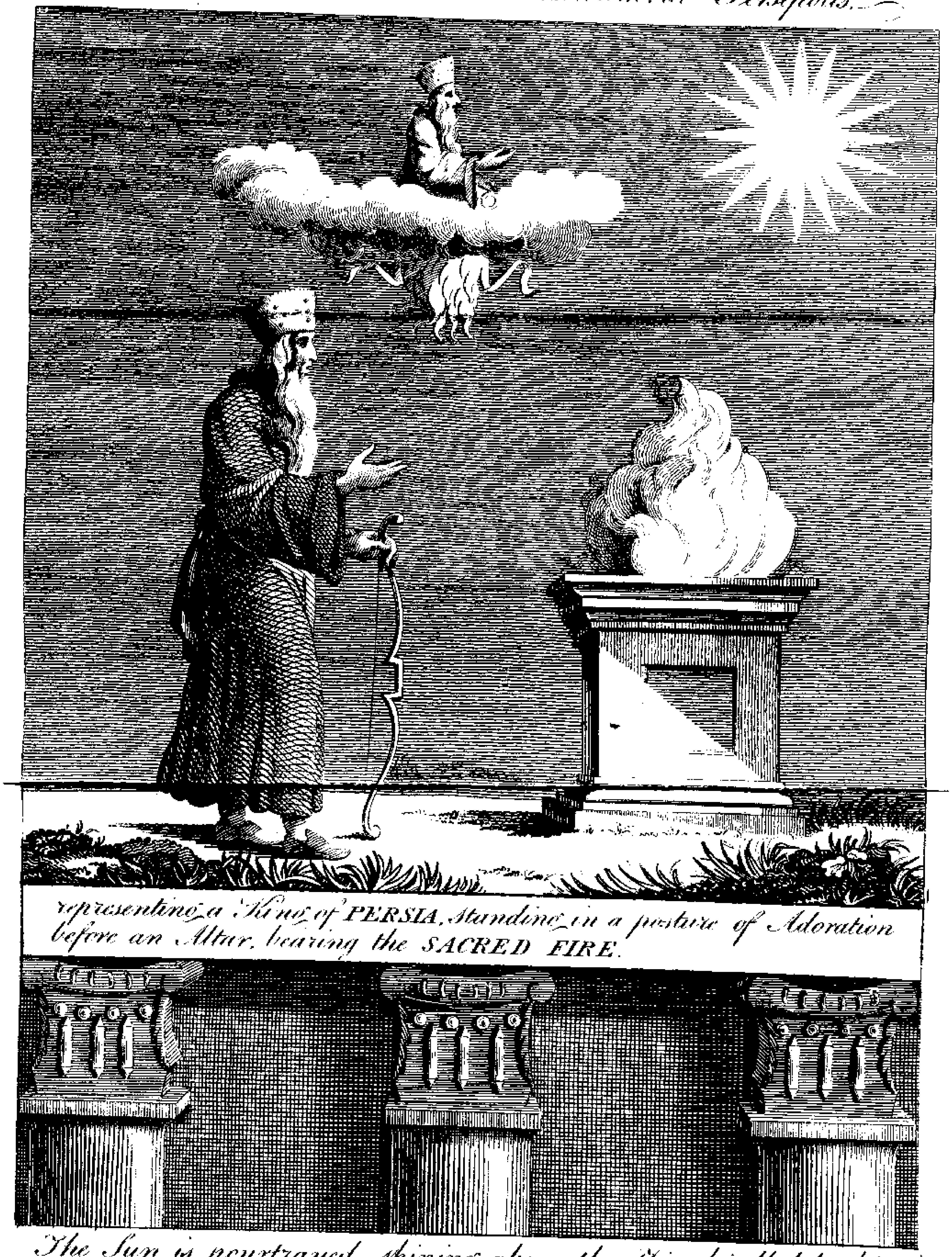
and introductory to the Investigation of the stupendous Antiquities remaining to this Day in the Caverns of Elephanta and Salsette.

THE investigation of that unpleasing but curious subject, the human sacrifices of the ancients, which engaged so large a portion of the former chapter, has too long detained us from the consideration of the other parts of the extensive system of the Hindoo Mythology; without a comprehensive insight into which it is impossible to understand the pages of their early history, or to arrive at any satisfactory knowledge of the hieroglyphics under which that history is veiled. Never did a belief in aërial beings, in the phantoms engendered by the warmth of a glowing and enthusiastic imagination, so universally infect a people as that belief did in ancient times, and does, at this day, infect the people of Hindostan. In the Ayeen Akbery, the world is said to be divided into ten quarters; over each of which presides a guardian spirit. Their names, and those of the quarters over which they rule, as stated in that authentic book, are thus arranged: "Indree, Aujin, Jum, Benyroot, Wurrun, Bayoo, Kobeir, Jysan, Birmha, Naga; East, South-east, South, South-west, West, North-west,

weſt, North, North-eaſt, Above, Below." Of theſe Dewtahs only two are deſerving particular notice: Birmha, or Brahma, the prince of the Dewtahs, who preſides over all *above*, and Naga, or, as Sir W. Jones* denominates him, SESHANAGA, who preſides over all *below*. Of Brahma we have ſpoken above, and ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak much more hereafter. But of this ſovereign of Patala, or the infernal regions, who alſo is the king of ſerpents, for the Hindoo Hell is compoſed of ſerpents, I am convinced my readers will think themſelves obliged to me for the following account taken from the Bhagavat, and inſerted from the author laſt quoted. Creeſhna is repreſented in that poem as deſcending with his favourite Arjun to the palace of this formidable divinity, and he is thus deſcribed: "He had a gorgeous appearance, with a thouſand heads, and on each of them a crown ſet with reſplendent jewels, one of which was larger and brighter than the reſt; his eyes gleamed like flaming torches, but his neck, his tongues, and his body, were black; the ſkirts of his habiliments were yellow, and a ſparkling jewel hung in every one of his ears: his arms were extended and adorned

* I am aware that Indree, the god of the firmament, is alſo frequently called the prince of the Dewtahs. But Brahma is the ſupreme firſt-born Dewtah. Conſult the Gentoo Code, p. 39.

SCULPTURE on an Ancient Mausoleum, at Persepolis.



The Sun is pourtrayed shining above the Fire kindled by his own Ray; and over the Head of the Devotee is the Image of his Soul, ascending upon a Cloud to Heaven.

from W Hyde

ed with rich bracelets; and his hands bore the holy ſhell, the radiated weapon, the mace for war, and the lotos."

The writers who flouriſhed in Greece and Rome had, as I before-remarked, but a very imperfect idea of the true principles of the religion of the Indians. Jupiter Ammon, Bacchus, Pan, and Pluto, are ſaid, by thoſe writers, to have been the principal divinities worſhipped in India. Strabo* expreſsly ſays, that they worſhipped Jupiter Pluvialis, the river Ganges, and Εγκωρίους Δαίμονες, *Indigetes Genios*. Such were the Grecian appellations for the ſeveral deities, or rather attributes of deity, adored throughout Hindoſtan. With far more truth was the celebrated GANGES affirmed, by the ſame writer, to be an object of ſuperſtitious veneration, when, charged with the bleſſings of Providence, he deſcended in majeſty from the mountains, and, with his overflowings, fertilized the thirſty ſoil. In fact, the legiſlator, whoſe ſublime precepts improved; the hero, who reſiſtleſs ſword defended; the patriot, whoſe inventive fancy adorned with uſeful arts the country that gave them birth; received the fervent prayers of the grateful Hindoo, were firſt remembered with admira-

tion,

* Strabonis Geograph. lib. xv. p. 682.

tion, and then idolized. Without referring to the Ægyptian Apis, we may aſſert, that the very animal whoſe milk nouriſhed him, and whoſe labours turned the fruitful ſod, received his tributary homage, and was ranked in order next to a divinity. This is the general key that unlocks the portals of the grand temple of Indian ſuperſtition, and perhaps, taken in a more general point of view, of all the ſuperſtitions of every region and of every denomination upon earth. To the philoſophic eye, that contemplates without prejudice their endleſs variety, this is the univerſal clue to their full developement, and thus only can the mighty maze be intimately and ſucceſsfully explored.

Beſides the deities above-enumerated, the Indians have a guardian genius, preſiding over water, named VARUNA;* over fire, named AGNI; the forger of the fiery ſhafts, called from him Agnyaſtra;† and over the winds,‡ named PAVAN. All the fanciful characters of a mythology, not greatly diſſimilar from that of Greece and Rome, ſeem to have prevailed among the Hindoos from the earlieſt periods.

They

* See an engraving of Varuna with her inſignia, oppoſite p. 215, of the firſt volume of the Aſiatic Reſearches.

† Aſiat. Reſearch. vol. i. p. 248. ‡ Ibid. 258.

They have CARTICEYA,* the god of war, formidable with ſix heads, and bearing, in his numerous hands, ſpears, ſabres, and other hoſtile weapons; whoſe prowefs is not inferior to the Mars of Rome. They have LACSHMI, the goddeſs of plenty, and the wife of Veeſhnu the preſerver; who, in Mr. Holwell's deſcriptive print, is repreſented crowned with ears of grain, and encircled by a plant, *bearing fruit*, forcibly reminding us of the Ceres of the ancients. They have SERASWATTI, the protectreſs of arts and ſciences, with her palmira-leaf, and her reed or pen for writing; ornaments more peculiarly characteriſtic of her high ſtation than thoſe which graced the armed Minerva of the Greeks. They have a more beautiful Cupid in CAMA, the god of love with his flowery ſhafts and cany bow: although a regard to truth forbids me to add, that they have a more decent Venus in BHAVANI, the conſort of Seeva, and goddeſs of generation; in honour of whom, on all the walls of the pagodas of Hindoſtan, ſacred to that deity, ſuch pictures are delineated and ſuch images are engraven, as though by no means inconſiſtent with *their*, are not at all compatible with

our,

* Aſiat. Reſearch. 252, with an engraving. Carticeya is generally written Karteek. The former is the Sanſcreet word unabridged.

cur, notions of delicacy and decorum. Thefe are indeed the fanciful creation of poets and painters; but the characters of a mythology far lefs pleafing were, before their exhibition, deeply imprinted on the minds of the Hindoos. They were prepared for the reception of whatever partook of the nature of fable and myftery; and if the fportive imagination wandered occafionally in the regions of mirth and feftivity, they were foon recalled, by impreffions at once awful and durable, to the contemplation of more gloomy objects. They found matter of alarm and dread even in the attributes of the facred triple deity, who was appointed to be their defender againft the malevolent Dewtah; and if, at one time, the amiable character and office of the preferver Veefhnu infpired them with grateful affection and veneration, they were, at other times, filled with the utmoft horror in contemplating the dreadful infignia and the defolating fury of the deftroyer Rudra, or Mahadeo.

Although I am apprehenfive of incurring the cenfure of my readers for extending to too great a length thefe reflections upon what is called, in India, the worfhip of Dewtahs, and, in other countries, that of Dæmons; yet, before I fhall be able to give any clear or fatif-

factory

factory idea of the probable devotion anciently practifed in the caverns of Salfette and in the magnificent pagoda of Elephanta, it is neceffary that we fhould ftill wider extend our furvey of this ftupendous fubject. What has already engaged our attention is but a portion of that gigantic fabric of fuperftition which caft its mighty fhadow over all the ancient world. The more fplendid part of that devotion remains ftill to be noticed. The former were earth-born deities, and we have loitered too long with the untutored Indian who only fees "God in clouds, and hears him in the wind." As there were deities who were permitted to range the earth, fo there were deities of a more exalted nature, who, as we before-obferved, had their ftation in the celeftial orbs. Thofe glittering orbs now demand our attention. Let us afcend the empyreum with fome portion of the zeal and fervour of the adorers of thofe fhining, but fenfelefs, deities.

Two of the principal fources of all mythology, particularized by Sir W. Jones, are, a wild admiration of the heavenly bodies, particularly of the SUN, and an immoderate refpect paid to the memory of powerful, wife, and virtuous, anceftors, efpecially the founders of kingdoms, legiflators, and warriors. If this remark on the

the origin of mythology be generally applicable to moſt nations, ſo it is in a peculiar manner forcible in the ſurvey which we are now taking of that of the Hindoos. It is the SUN, that vaſt body of fire, which, Milton ſays, "Looks from his ſole dominion like the god of this new world," it is that glorious planet, which beams with ſuch tranſcendant and unceaſing ſplendor in Eaſtern countries, whoſe ray hath kindled the devotions of mankind from age to age, and hath been the great fountain of idolatry in India. Indeed the moſt ancient ſuperſtition of all nations has been the worſhip of the SUN, as the lord of heaven and governor of the world, and in particular it prevailed in Phœnicia, Chaldæa, Egypt, and, from later information, we may add, Peru and Mexico. Repreſented in a variety of ways, and concealed under a multitude of fanciful names, through all the revolutions of time the great luminary of heaven hath exacted from the generations of men the tribute of devotion.

How particularly the ancient Perſians were addicted to this mode of worſhip, how profound and univerſal was their veneration of FIRE, and particularly of the SOLAR FIRE, is evident in every page of Dr. Hyde, who has made that religion the ſubject of his accurate inveſtigation.

investigation. The infatuated votaries of this religion were forbidden to spit into the fire, or to throw water upon it, even if the metropolis were in flames. The Magi, however, as has been before-remarked, did not deny a SUPREME PRESIDING PRINCIPLE, the Creator and Governor of the universe, who was the proper object of man's adoration, but they considered the SUN as his image in the visible universe, as a faint copy of the bright original, worthy to be honoured with external worship and devout prostration. They imagined his throne to be seated in the SUN; and that it was the paradise of the blessed. From the Magi of Persia the idolatrous infection might easily spread to the Brachmanes of India, between whom an occasional intercourse from the earliest ages may, without violating probability, be supposed to have existed. Under the character of the god SURYA, of whom, and his car, drawn by seven green* horses, and guided by his charioteer ARUN, or the Dawn, an engraving is given in the Asiatic Researches, the SOLAR ORB is regarded with adoration by the Hindoos, and the sect more particularly devoted to the worship of that deity are called SAURA. Indeed it is not improbable that, in very remote æras,

 the

* Green, as the emblem, I presume, of eternal youth.

the Indians held the Sun in almoſt as general veneration as their Perſian neighbours. We are informed by a writer,* who viſited India ſeventeen hundred years ago, that he there beheld a moſt ſuperb temple erected in honour of that planet, the walls of which were of red marble, reſembling fire, and interſperſed with ſtreaks of gold. On the pavement of this temple was an image of the radiant divinity, hardly inferior in ſplendour to his own dazzling ſphere: his rays being imitated in a boundleſs profuſion of rubies, pearls, and diamonds, of ineſtimable value, arranged in a moſt judicious manner, and darting forth a luſtre ſcarcely tolerable to the organs of ſight. As this account of Apollonius may be conſidered as ſuſpicious, I ſhall here inſert a deſcription of the TEMPLE of the SUN from the Ayeen Akbery, which, although Mr. Gladwin conceives Abul Fazil to have been deceived in regard to its magnitude, ſince no traces of this vaſt fabric at preſent remain, will yet be conſidered as a proof that ſuch a worſhip did actually flouriſh there at ſome remote period in its meridian glory.

" Near to Jagernaut is the temple of the SUN, in the erecting of which was expended the whole revenue of Oriſſa for twelve years.

No

* Philoſtratus in Vit. Apollon. lib. ii. p. 87.

No one can behold this immenſe edifice, without being ſtruck with amazement. The wall, which ſurrounds the whole, is one hundred and fifty cubits high, and nineteen cubits thick. There are three entrances to it. At the eaſtern gate there are two very fine figures of elephants, each with a man upon his trunk. On the weſt, are two ſurprizing figures of horſemen completely armed; and over the northern gates are carved two tigers, who, having killed two elephants, are ſitting upon them. In the front of the gate is a pillar of black ſtone, of an octagonal form, fifty cubits high. There are nine flights of ſteps; after aſcending which, you come into an extenſive encloſure, where you diſcover a large dome, conſtructed of ſtone, upon which are carved the SUN and the STARS, and, round them, is a border, on which is repreſented a variety of human figures, expreſſing the different paſſions; ſome kneeling; others proſtrated with their faces upon the earth; together with minſtrels, and a number of ſtrange and wonderful animals, ſuch as never exiſted but in imagination."* This is ſaid to be a work of ſeven hundred and thirty years antiquity: it was erected by a RAJA. The Ayeen Akbery farther

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 11.

informs us, that ſome of the Hindoo philoſophers conſider the fixed ſtars and planets as BEINGS, and as borrowing their light from the ſun; others aſſert that they derive their light from the moon, and believe each to be under the influence of ſome celeſtial ſpirit; while others, again, affirm, that the ſtars are the ſouls of men departed this life, and raiſed to this high dignity in reward of their virtues and auſterities.

At this day the Indian rajas are fond of tracing back to the ſolar deity their fabulous origin, and Mr. Dow * acquaints us, that he himſelf was in poſſeſſion of a long liſt of a dynaſty of kings, who boaſted the diſtinguiſhed title of SURYA-bans and CHANDRA-bans, or children of the ſun and moon. The Aſiatic Reſearches confirm and explain this intelligence, by informing us, that SURYA† is believed to have frequently deſcended from his car in a human ſhape, and to have begotten an earthly progeny, equally renowned in the Indian ſtories with the Heliades of Greece; and that another great Indian family are called the children of the moon, or CHANDRA, under which form ESWARA, or the God of nature, is often worſhipped. We muſt not be

* Dow, vol. i. p. 31. † Aſiat. Reſearch. vol. i. p. 263.

be surprised, the president of the Asiatic Society observes, at finding, on a close examination, that the characters of all the pagan deities, male and female, melt into each other, and, at last, into one or two; for, it seems a well-founded opinion, that the whole crowd of gods and goddesses, in ancient Rome and modern Varanes, means only the powers of nature, and, principally, the SUN. He owns himself inclined to believe that not only Creeshna or Veeshnu, but even Brahma and Seeva, when united and expressed by the mystical word OM, an expression that frequently occurs in Sanscreet invocations * of the deity, were designed by the first idolaters to represent the SOLAR FIRE. By the triliteral word A U M, which letters coalesce and form OM, the triple divinity, Brahma, Veeshnu, and Seeva, are meant to be expressed; or, in other words, the power of the Almighty to create, to preserve, and to destroy. It may be added that the term OM is considered in so sacred a light, that it never escapes the lips of a pious Hindoo, but is the subject of his meditation in holy and profound silence. Their mode of adoring the SUN is said, by

 Lucian,

* It particularly occurs in a most sublime prayer to BOODH, translated by Mr. Wilkins, in Asiat. Research. vol. i. p. 285.

Lucian, in his treatiſe de Saltatione, to have conſiſted in a circular dance, in imitation of that orb's ſuppoſed motion round the earth, by which all nature was gladdened, and from which the various ranks of beings derived light and ſupport. SURYA KOOND is mentioned, under the Subah of Owd, in the Ayeen Akbery, as a place of religious worſhip very celebrated and much frequented; and a feſtival, called the SURYA POOJA, or the worſhip of the ſun, Mr. Holwell * acquaints us, is ſtill obſerved on the ſeventh day of the new moon, in January, when peculiar offerings of flowers are made to that luminary in the Ganges. The veſtiges of this ſuperſtition are, in fact, at this day, evident in all the ſacred rites and multiform ceremonies of the Brahmins. At their firſt putting on the ZENNAR, or ſacred cord of *three threads*, the myſtic ſymbol of their faith, they learn the *gayteree*, which are certain words in praiſe of the SUN. At ſun-riſe they turn to the eaſt, and, filling the palms of their hands with water, and at the ſame time repeating a prayer, they throw it towards that luminary. They preſerve, conſtantly

* See Holwell on the Gentoo faſts and feſtivals, India Tracts, part ii. p. 134.

ſtantly burning, a kind of *ſacred fire*, kindled by the friction of two pieces of palaſs-wood, with which they perform the howm, or *burnt ſacrifice*. The new-born babe of a Brahmin is obliged to be expoſed to the *ſolar beam*, and, in the words of the Ayeen Akbery,* to conclude, and in ſome degree to explain, the myſtic rite, THEY WORSHIP GOD IN THE SUN AND IN FIRE.

The following paſſages, in proof of what has been advanced, concerning the veneration entertained by the Indians for the ſun and fire, are extracted from the three principal tranſlations, from the Sanſcreet, which have yet appeared in the Engliſh language; I mean the GEETA and the HEETOPADES, publiſhed by Mr. Wilkins, and the beautiful drama of SACONTALA, or, *The fatal Ring*, by Sir William Jones. Theſe three compoſitions are of the moſt venerable antiquity, and in them, doubtleſs, are diſplayed the manners and the pinciples prevailing at thoſe remote æras in which they were written.

In the GEETA, Arjun is informed by Creeſhna, that "God is in the *fire* of the altar, and that the devout, with offerings,

 direct

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. i. p. 215, 220, 227, where all theſe various circumſtances are ſtated at large.

direct their worship unto God in the *fire*." P. 54. " I am the *fire*, I am the victim." P. 80. The Divinity is frequently characterized in that book, as in other Sanscreet compositions, by the word OM, that mystic emblem of the Deity in India, bearing, probably, the same signification as the Egyptian ON, which, Sir William Jones observes,* is generally supposed to mean the SUN. Besides innumerable allusions, throughout the text, to the " ardent fire, the glorious sun, the immeasurable light," in the episode annexed, the refulgent CHAKRÀ, or warlike weapon of Narayan, beautiful, yet terrible, to behold, is said to have " glowed like the sacrificial flame," and to have " burnt like the oil-fed fire." Pages 150 and 151.

In the HEETOPADES it is said, that "*fire* is the superior of the Brahmins, as the Brahmin is the superior of the tribes." P. 35. In the note on this passage, Mr. Wilkins remarks, that this element, in ancient times, seems to have been universally *deified*; that the Hindoos are enjoined, by the Vedas, to light up a fire, produced in the manner I before stated from the Ayeen Akbery, and to cherish it as long as they live. With this fire, he adds, all

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 242.

all their ſacrifices are burnt, their nuptial altar flames, and, finally, the funeral pile is kindled: " The SUN ſhould be worſhipped on the back, the GOD OF FIRE on the belly." P. 101.

In the SACONTALA ſtill more numerous inſtances occur, in which the orb of the ſun and the hallowed fire are ſpoken of and addreſſed in terms of adoration: " Water was the firſt work of the Creator, and *fire* receives the oblations ordained by law; the ſacrifice is performed with ſolemnity; may ISA, the God of nature," (a perſonification of the Sun, the ISIS of the Egyptians,) " bleſs and ſuſtain you!" The following paſſage will prove of two-fold utility towards explaining and illuſtrating what has before been remarked: " O king," exclaim the pupils of the venerable Canna, amidſt the central glooms of their holy grove, " while we are beginning our evening-ſacrifice, the figures of bloodthirſty dæmons, embrowned by clouds, collected at the departure of the day, glide over the *ſacred hearth*, and ſpread conſternation around." P. 38. " My ſweet child, there has been a happy omen: the young Brahmin who officiated in our morning-ſacrifice, though his ſight was impeded by clouds of ſmoke, dropped

ped the clarified butter into the very centre of the *adorable flame*." "When he entered the place where the *holy fire* was blazing, he heard a voice from heaven pronouncing divine meaſures." "As the wood, Sami, becomes pregnant with *myſterious fire*." P. 43. "My beſt-beloved, come and walk with me round the *ſacrificial fire*; may *theſe fires* preſerve thee! *fires*, which ſpring to their appointed ſtations on the holy hearth, and conſume the conſecrated wood, while the freſh blades of myſterious cuſa-graſs lie ſcattered around them! *ſacramental fires*, which deſtroy ſin with the riſing fumes of clarified butter!" P. 47. "Could Arun" (the charioteer of the Sun, that is, the dawn) "diſpel the ſhades of night, if the DEITY WITH A THOUSAND BEAMS had not placed him before the car of day.?" P. 85. In ſelecting theſe paſſages from the drama of Sacontala, I have reluctantly paſſed over pages glowing with all the ſplendour of Oriental imagery, crowded with ſuch novel and beautiful deſcriptions, and breathing ſuch elevated ſentiments of friendſhip, as well as ſuch impaſſioned ſtrains of tender affection, that I cannot too ſtrongly recommend to the reader an attentive peruſal of the whole piece, and he will not fail heartily

to

to join with me, in hoping that the tranſlator may recede from his declared reſolution to engage no farther in taſks of a ſimilar nature.

The Moon, the next conſpicuous luminary of heaven, is by no means without *his* tribe of adorers in Hindoſtan. *His*, I ſay; for, contrary to all other ſyſtems of mythology, the Moon ſhines forth to the Hindoos a male divinity. This is ſurely an argument that proves how little they have condeſcended to borrow from other nations; for, in this male deity, we are unable to trace even the Iſis of Egypt, whom Herodotus* declares to have been conſtantly repreſented and worſhipped, at Buſiris, under the form of a woman with the horns of a cow, (as IO was in Greece;) upon which account, and becauſe that animal was ſacred to Iſis, the cow was held in the higheſt veneration throughout Egypt. The Indian name of the Moon is Chandra, and Mr. Wilkins, our unerring guide, informs us,† that he is drawn by the fancy

* Heredoti, lib. ii. p. 118. Stephani edit. 1592. This whole ſecond book of Herodotus, and part of the third, treats of the Egyptians, their hiſtory, religion, and manners, and therefore I have minutely attended to it.

† Heetopades, p. 177, and note 235.

fancy of the Hindoo poets as a deity, sitting in a ſplendid chariot drawn by two antelopes, and holding in his right hand a rabbit. We learn from the Heetopades, that, to him, fountains were dedicated. Of thoſe ſacred fountains there are many in Hindoſtan: and, in particular, the Ayeen Akbery reports,* that, in the village of Kehrow, in Caſhmere, there are no leſs than 360; a number worthy of notice, becauſe the exact number of the days of the ancient year, before it was reformed by more correct obſervation. To pierce the hitherto-unexplored depths of the Hindoo ſyſtem of aſtronomy, connected as that ſyſtem is with their religion, is alike beyond the ſcope of my ability and the means of information in my poſſeſſion. If encouraged by the public to proceed in theſe inveſtigations into the ancient hiſtory and ſciences of that country, I ſhall, in a future portion of this infant work, attempt the arduous taſk of preſenting my readers with the ſubſtance of what *is already known* on that head; and ſhall principally regulate my reſearches by the chapter on aſtronomy in the Ayeen Akbery, which is a profeſſed extract from the famous Surya Sudhant of India,

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 159.

India, a book compofed, Abul Fazil informs us, " fome hundred thoufand years ago;" by M. Bailly's celebrated " Traité de l'Aftronomie Indienne et Orientale;" by Mr. Playfair's accurate and ingenious differtation, lately publifhed in the fecond volume of the Tranfactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and by the vaft treafure of information to be collected from Mr. Coftard's profound Treatife upon the Aftronomy of the Chaldæans, Arabians, and other Eaftern nations. For the prefent it will be fufficient for us to take a general retrofpect of the gradual advances made by the human mind, from contemplating and admiring the celeftial orbs, to deifying and adoring them. This will in its confequences lead us to a more particular confideration of that other principal fource of all mythology mentioned before, viz. an immoderate refpect paid to the memory of powerful, wife, and virtuous, anceftors, efpecially the founders of kingdoms, legiflators, and warriors.

Devoted to paftoral life, and fcattered over the extenfive plains of Afia, the ancient fathers of the human race could not avoid being deeply ftruck with the number, the beauty, and the fplendour, of the heavenly bodies.

Amidft

Amidſt the ſilence of ſurrounding night, in thoſe delightful regions where the mildneſs of the climate allows the inhabitants to ſleep in the open air, the wakeful eye of contemplation beheld and marked the ſlow progreſſive motion of thoſe bodies through the clear blue ſky above them. They obſerved their various mutations, they noted their diſtinguiſhing phænomena, the riſing of ſome and the ſetting of others; and, from that aſcenſion and decline, they learned to regulate their conduct as to the times and the ſeaſons proper for the ſowing of grain and the tillage of the ground. In proceſs of time they formed catalogues of the ſtars, they arranged them under various claſſes, and regiſtered them in regular ſeries. They portioned out the viſible firmament itſelf into forty-eight different conſtellations, and, in conformity to the hieroglyphic taſte of the times, diſtinguiſhed thoſe conſtellations by the figures of various animals and other imaginary ſimilitudes. From long and accurate obſervation of the conſequences attending the particular ſituation of ſome of them in the heavens, they ſuppoſed theſe revolving orbs to have an influence upon the earth and upon the ſeaſons; and the Greek and Ro-

man

man poets, probably imitating the ancient writers of Egypt and Syria, crowd their pages with allufions to thofe fuppofed influences. Non hæc Pleiades faciunt, nec *aquofus* Orion.*

> Nec fævus Arcturi *cadentis*
> Impetus, aut *orientis* Hædi.†

A paffage, which occurs in the ancient and venerable book of Job, feems pointedly to allude to the reigning fuperftition of the day. *Canft thou reftrain the fweet influences of Pleiades, or loofen the bands of Orion?* It was natural for thofe, who maintained the doctrine of their influence upon the elements of nature, to extend ftill farther their romantic conjectures, and to affert a fimilar predominant influence of the celeftial orbs in all terreftrial concerns, but efpecially in the important and interefting events which befal great nations; in the profperity and defolation of kingdoms; in the elevation to empire of triumphant virtue; and in the downfal of defeated tyranny. The planetary train, that conftitute our own fyftem, as performing their revolutions nearer the earth, were thought to have a more particular afcendency over the fate of its inhabitants;

* Propertius, ii. 16. 51.

† Hor. iii. Carm. i. 27.

bitants; and the period of their tranſit over the ſun's diſk, and that of their occaſionally coming into conjunction with any other conſtellation, was regarded as a period pregnant with the moſt awful events, and productive of the moſt aſtoniſhing viciſſitudes.

Impreſſed, therefore, with alternate wonder and terror at beholding theſe imagined effects of their influence upon this globe, from vigilantly obſerving, mankind proceeded by degrees to reſpect and venerate them, and intenſe ardour of contemplation in time mounted to all the fervor of devotion. Some of the ancients ſuppoſed the STARS to be inhabited by beings, who not only guided their motions, but directed their benign or pernicious influences, and, conſequently, to thoſe preſiding beings they addreſſed their adoration. Others imagined the STARS to be themſelves animated intelligences, or ZOPHESEMIN;* and paid to the *ſphere* the worſhip due to its Maker. But almoſt every nation of the ancient world united in conſidering them as the reſidence of departed ſpirits and the glorious receptacles of beatified virtue. According to the preceding extracts from the Ayeen Akbery, the Hindoo philoſophers were deeply infected

* See Biſhop Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 2.

infected with each of these errors; and the accounts given by Sir Robert Barker * in the Philosophical Transactions of the remains of astronomical and mathematical instruments, "stupendously large, immoveable from the spot, and constructed of stone, some of them upwards of twenty feet in height," which he saw in the ancient observatory of Benares, as well as the discovery which Mr. Call † reports, in the same book, he himself made of the signs of the zodiac on the ceilings of many of the more ancient *choulteries* of the Peninsula, strongly incline us to think that the science of astronomy was, in ancient India, carried to the utmost height of perfection, attainable in those periods and by those instruments; and at the same time it was undoubtedly attended with all those degrading superstitions, such as divination, incantation, and judicial astrology, which were its inseparable concomitants in that early æra. It is a most singular circumstance, that the days of the week, in India, are arranged as in Egypt and Greece, according to the number of the planets, and are distinguished by similar appellations, and, for my own part,

* Phil. Transact. vol. lxvii. p. 598.

† Phil. Transact. vol. lxii. p. 353.

part, I have not a doubt but that the various ſpheres, or *boobuns*, of purification, through which the doctrine of the Metempſychoſis, as explained by Mr. Halhed,* has doomed the ſoul to paſs in its progreſs to conſummate happineſs and perfection, have a direct alluſion to the *planets.* But I am launching into a vaſt ocean, in which it was not at preſent my intention to venture my ſmall bark.

To thoſe bright and conſpicuous manſions of the ſky, as I have obſerved, the ſervile adulation of the ancient nations of the earth exalted the departed ſpirits of illuſtrious kings and legiſlators; while the partial fondneſs and blind zeal of individuals wafted to the ſame happy regions the ſouls of their deceaſed progenitors who were venerable for religion and virtue. A variety of paſſages in the ancient poets may be adduced in proof of this aſſertion, but particularly one in Virgil, who, in a ſtrain of unmanly flattery to Auguſtus, while yet living, aſks him among which of the conſtellations he will chooſe to take up his future reſidence.

Anne

* See page 46 of his Preface to the Gentoo Code, quarto edition, and page 41 of the ſame Preface, where the Sanſcreet names of the days of the week are enumerated in their proper order, as they alſo are in the Ayeen Akbery, p. 12.

Anne novum ſidus tardis te menſibus addas
Qua locus ERIGONEN inter CHELASQUE ſequentes
Panditur? Ipſe tibi jam brachia contrahit ardens
SCORPIUS, et cœli juſta plus parte reliquit.
Georg. i. 33.

Theſe lines are alſo quoted by that ingenious aſtronomer, Mr. Coſtard,* but for another purpoſe, the elucidation of an aſtronomical remark; and it would appear from that remark, that the accuracy of the poet's deſcription does him greater honour than the fulſome compliment contained in them did Auguſtus.

The contagion of *ſidereal worſhip*, in conſequence of the ſtars being regarded as animated intelligences, or as inhabited by divinities, ſpread rapidly and univerſally among all the nations of the Eaſtern world, except among that favoured people to whom the Almighty thought proper to reveal the glorious doctrines of the true religion. For, thus, in the moſt ancient and moſt ſublime drama which the human intellect ever produced, the devout JOB makes proteſtation of his innocence as to the crime of this prevailing idolatry:† *If I beheld the* SUN *when it ſhined, or the* MOON *walking in brightneſs; and my heart hath been ſecretly enticed, or my mouth hath kiſſed my hand: this, alſo, were*

* See Coſtard's Aſtronomy, p. 19. † Job, c. xxxi. v. 26.

were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge; for I should then have denied the God that is above! The planets, in time, became distinguished by the names of the most renowned personages in fabulous antiquity, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Diana; but these orbs, from their rising and setting, being frequently concealed from the view of the enthusiastic adorer, invention supplied their place by forming representative images of those fancied deities, to whom, after solemnly consecrating them, they paid their devotion with as much fervour as to the real planet. In this practice, as Dr. Prideaux* has judiciously observed, we trace the first origin of the *Sabian superstition*, or worship of idols, in which abomination the ancient pagan world were so deeply immersed; and, from this period, Saturn, Jupiter, and the other sidereal divinities, continued to be holden in the most sacred veneration through all the periods of the Assyrian, Greek, and Roman, empires. Before these figures, which they invoked by the several names their blind bigotry has assigned them, in deep caverns and

* See Prideaux's Connections, vol. i. p. 178, and, likewise, those of Dr. Shuckford, vol. ii. p. 388, who, notwithstanding the severe attacks of Warburton, on this subject of the origin of the various species of pagan idolatry, has displayed erudition little inferior to that of the haughty critic.

and woody receſſes, the firſt temples of the world, they performed their myſterious rites; they kindled the ſacred fire, of which their glowing ſpheres ſeemed to be formed; and they offered oblations to them of the nobleſt beaſts of the field and the choiceſt productions of the earth. In the wild delirium of their zeal, and under the impulſes of a ſacred fury, they ſhouted aloud the lofty pæans of praiſe and triumph; they mingled in the circular dance, which was intended to imitate that of the planets; and they tried the moſt potent ſpells, and uttered the moſt tremendous incantations, in full confidence of drawing down, into thoſe ſymbolic figures, the ſame powerful ſpirits which were ſuppoſed to roll them through the æther, and the ſame bland or baleful influences which they were believed to diſpenſe from on high.

That a conſiderable portion of the hieroglyphic ſculptures and paintings, in the temples of Hindoſtan, have an aſtronomical alluſion, has never been doubted by thoſe who have accurately ſurveyed and attentively conſidered them; though their latent meaning and intricate hiſtory have never been completely developed. The blaze of glory ſtreaming from the radiated crowns on the heads of all the

AVATARS, whofe figures are engraved in the Afiatic Refearches, fpeak their defcent from the regions of light and glory; the emblematical ornaments of ferpents that deck the venerated ftatues of the GOD-RAJAHS, who frown on the walls of the various cavern-pagodas; the figures of facred and fidereal animals, fculptured near them; the facerdotal vafes for oblation; the confecrated bells which the hands of fome ftatues bear, and the facred zennar and ftaff of Brahmins which diftinguifh others; all thefe circumftances united evince their immediate connection with the profoundeft myfteries of fcience and with the moft awful rites of religion.

We have not yet come to the examination of the ancient Egyptian fuperftitions, and their ftriking fimilarity to thofe of India; but if we caft a digreffive eye towards that country, and examine the catalogue of her numerous deities; if we attentively-perufe the varied page of their hiftory, and mark the difcriminating features of their feveral characters; we fhall find them, for the moft part, to be nothing more than HEROES DEIFIED. Thus, Vulcan, Bacchus, Thoth, Hercules, having, by their fkill in arts or their prowefs in arms, greatly benefited the early inhabitants of the world; as, for inftance,

Vulcan,

Vulcan, by the invention of the forge and by inſtructing mankind in the uſe of fire; Seſoſtris, or Bacchus, by teaching them the right method of agriculture and of planting the vine; Thoth, or Hermes, by the invention of letters and the patronage of ſcience; Hercules, by the unparalleled labour of draining the lakes of Egypt, and by overthrowing in battle Buſiris and its other tyrannic princes, thoſe giants in power and monſters in vice; by ſuch illuſtrious exploits theſe auguſt perſonages ſucceſſively roſe to immortal honours. The ſame remark, probably, holds good in regard to India, or even applies with ſtill greater force. If we could diveſt the hiſtory of its moſt ancient ſovereigns of the fabulous ornaments, with which adulatory poetry and reigning ſuperſtition have decorated them, they would appear to be only a race of dignified mortals, diſtinguiſhed by their wiſdom as legiſlators, their erudition as philoſophers, or their fortitude in battle. Thus RAMA, one of the great incarnate deities, whom the Indians believe to have been an appearance on earth of the *preſerving Power*, and whom Sir William Jones takes to be the Indian Bacchus, when ſtript of his divine honours, will appear to be only the SOVEREIGN OF AYODHYA, a conqueror of the high-

eſt renown, and the deliverer of nations from tyrants. Thus Brahma himſelf, if we may be allowed for a moment to loſe ſight of the etymology of his name, and rend the allegoric veil that ſhadows his perſon, might only have been the GODLIKE MORTAL, profoundly ſkilled in theology and legiſlation, who firſt poliſhed a barbarous people, regulated their conduct by an admirable code of ſalutary laws, and gave energy and ſtability to an unſettled government. Mr. Scrafton is of opinion that Brahma was king as well as legiſlator over all the vaſt continent of India,* and that he intended, by the ſolemn obligations of religion, to fix the attachment of his ſubjects to their own country as well as to bind them to the obſervance of his laws. The learned perſonage, to whoſe deep reſearches into the Indian mythology I have ſo often had occaſion to refer, ſeems to countenance a ſimilar opinion, when he offers a conjecture that the former deity was in reality *Rama*, the ſon of *Cuſh*,† who might have eſtabliſhed the firſt regular government in this part of Aſia. The Ayeen Akbery, too, appears to decide the matter, where that book

* See Mr. Scrafton's Reflections on the Government of Hindoſtan, p. 5.

† Aſiat. Reſearch. vol. i. p. 258.

book affirms that RAMCHUND was rajah of Owd,* in the *Tretah Yug*, and that he united in himſelf the two-fold office of king and prophet.

But it is now neceſſary that we ſhould once more direct our attention towards PERSIA.— The profound reverence, before-noticed to have been equally entertained by the Magi of Perſia and the Brachmans of India, for the SOLAR ORB and for FIRE, forms a moſt ſtriking and prominent feature of reſemblance between the religion of Zoroaſter and that of Brahma. Indeed if any perſon, deeply ſkilled in the principles of both ſyſtems of theology, were minutely to examine and compare them together, I am convinced, that, except in the dreadful inſtance of that inceſtuous commerce allowed his diſciples by the Perſian legiſlator, and ſome peculiar local ſuperſtitions practiſed by the Indians, no very material difference would be found between them. But Zoroaſter, according to Ulug-Beg, quoted by Dr. Hyde, was the greateſt mathematician and aſtronomer that the Eaſt in thoſe remote periods ever ſaw. He had ſo far penetrated into the great arcana of nature, and had raiſed the Magian name to ſuch a height, that, in the darker

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 41.

darker ages which ſucceeded, they were ſuppoſed to poſſeſs ſupernatural knowledge and powers; and hence the odious term of *magic* has been ever ſince beſtowed upon arts that ſeemed to ſurpaſs human power to attain, and that of *magicians* upon thoſe who practiſed them. In the union of aſtronomy and theology, which were ſiſter-ſciences in thoſe days, we ſhall perhaps find an explanation of thoſe myſterious rites of cavern-worſhip, the origin and nature of which have ſo long perplexed the ingenious in their inquiries, concerning the ſpecies of devotion ſuppoſed to have been anciently practiſed in the caverns of SALSETTE and ELEPHANTA.

Whatever might have been the oldeſt ſpecies of devotion originally celebrated either in Perſia or India, and moſt likely, from human nature being every where open to the ſame impreſſions, it was this worſhip of the Sun, it is probable that Brahma, and it is certain that Zoroaſter, only improved upon the popular ſuperſtition, rejecting the more groſs, and retaining the more refined, parts of the ancient rites and ceremonies already inſtituted in each country. Of Zoroaſter there are two opinions: the firſt is, that he was king of Bactria, and,

according

according to Juſtin,* lived ſo early as the days of Ninus, by whom he was ſlain in battle; the ſecond and more generally received opinion is that maintained by Dr. Hyde, who aſſerts that he flouriſhed in the reign of Darius Hyſtaſpes, about 520 years before Chriſt, that he was of no very exalted origin, and that he reſided in Babylon during the Jewiſh captivity, where he obtained that intimate acquaintance with the doctrines of the Hebrews which appear ſo conſpicuouſly in many parts of his ZEND. The learned Drs. Hyde† and Prideaux‡ in my humble opinion too far violate probability when they repreſent Zoroaſter to have been himſelf a native of Paleſtine, of Jewiſh parentage, and to have lived a menial ſervant in the families of either Ezra or Daniel. The profound and various learning which he poſſeſſed ſuppoſes a deſcent far leſs inglorious, and an education far more poliſhed, than a mere ſlave could poſſibly have enjoyed; and, if he had been a Jew, he would not have neglected to enforce upon his diſciples the neceſſity of that *peculiar rite* which forms the characteriſtic diſtinction of the progeny of Abraham.

* Juſtin, lib. i. c. i.

† Hyde's Hiſt. Relig. Vet. Perſ. cap. xxiv. p. 314.

‡ Prideaux's Connections, vol. i. p. 213.

Abraham. He found the people of Perſia immerſed in the depth of that groſs idolatry, the fire-worſhip, eſtabliſhed by the Magians; for, though they pretended to worſhip God in the fire, the Deity himſelf had long been forgotten in the ſymbol of his worſhip. He purged their minds of the impure and ſenſual depravity. He revived among them the principles of that genuine religion, which time, and objects more palpable, had effaced from their minds. He called himſelf the reſtorer of the primitive devotion of Abraham, that great and enlightened patriarch, ſo highly venerated throughout all the Eaſt; and, as he had read that the Almighty ſpoke to Moſes out of the *burning buſh*, and to the whole aſſembled ſons of Iſrael out of the *fire*, that glowed on Mount Sinai; that he had manifeſted his divine preſence to them, on their march from Egypt, under the appearance of a column of *flame*; that he reſided in the *luminous glory*, diſplayed between the cherubim; and that he had commanded a never-dying *flame* to be cheriſhed on the great altar of his temple at Jeruſalem, on which the burnt-ſacrifices were offered: animated by theſe circumſtances, the artful theologue pretended that he himſelf had been admitted to a viſion of the Moſt High; and, being taken up into heaven, had

had been addreſſed by the Eternal from the midſt of a vaſt and pure circle of ſurrounding flame. By this plea he juſtified a practice which he would have found it difficult to cruſh; he gratified the wiſhes of the prejudiced; he obtained the approbation of the ſovereign; and he effected a change without the hazard of an innovation.

Brahma being, avowedly, a mythologic perſonage, I can give no hiſtorical account of the æra when the code, that bears his name, was acknowledged as the ſovereign law of India; for, that is ſurely inadmiſſible which Mr. Dow's Prefatory Diſſertation fixes, viz. 4887 from the year 1769, when that Diſſertation was written, and conſequently above 4900 years previous to the preſent year. From the variety of the doctrines of which the ſacred volumes of India treat and of the ſciences which they diſcuſs, from the claſhing, and, in the inſtance of ſanguinary ſacrifices and vindictive incantations, from the abſolute contradiction of the mandates inculcated in them, as well as from their bulk, it is probable that the Vedas were not the labour of one legiſlator only, but the reſult of the collective wiſdom of ages: the auguſt fabric of many legiſlators, accommodating themſelves, as all legiſlators

occaſionally

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occaſionally muſt, to the fluctuating principles of the times, the ſucceſſive ſuperſtitions or the progreſſive improvement of the people. This idea is, throughout his treatiſe, maintained by Mr. Holwell,* who, from evidence obtained in India, aſſerts, that the fourth Veda, in particular, is a publication fifteen hundred years poſterior to the other three. This opinion is, I know, combated in the Prefatory Diſſertation of Mr. Dow,† and by ſome other writers ſtill more reſpectable; yet I have ſolid authority for thinking Mr. Holwell's aſſertion to be founded in truth. The argument in favour of this opinion, advanced in the Aſiatic Reſearches,‡ is two-fold. The firſt ariſes from the very ſingular circumſtance of only three Vedas having been mentioned in the moſt ancient and venerable of the Hindoo writers; and the names of thoſe three Vedas occur in their proper order in the compound word *Rigyajubſama*, that is to ſay, the *Reig* Veda, the *Yajuſh* Veda, and the *Saman* Veda. The ſecond argument is drawn from the manifeſt difference in the ſtyle between the fourth

* Holwell, part ii. p. 13. † Dow's Prefat. Diſſert. p. 30.

‡ Aſiat. Reſearch. vol. i. p. 346 and 347. See alſo, on this ſubject, Mr. Wilkins's preface to the Bhagvat Geeta, p. 25, whoſe argument is deciſive.

fourth or *Atharva* Veda and the three before named. That of the latter is now grown ſo obſolete as hardly to be intelligible to the Brahmins of Benares, and to appear almoſt a different dialect of the Sanſcreet, while that of the former is comparatively modern, and may be eaſily read, even by a learner of that ſacred language, without the aid of a dictionary. I am entirely at a loſs, without ſome ſuch ſuppoſition, to account for the contradictions juſt mentioned and many others in the Vedas; for, to enjoin a poſitive inſtitution in one page, and, in the next, to inſert precepts of a direct contrary tendency, in the important article of national religion, argues an inconſiſtency of which no intelligent Deity nor wiſe legiſlator could be guilty. Amidſt theſe contradictions therefore, for the ſake of conſiſtency, I am compelled to ſuppoſe the exiſtence of ſuch a circumſtance, or elſe ſome interpolation or mutilation of the Brahmins, who, like the Egyptian prieſts, kept thoſe ſacred books from the inſpection of the vulgar, and altered the text, or explained its meaning, as they pleaſed. The juſt and benevolent parts I am willing to impute to Brahma, or that firſt wiſe legiſlator to whom we apply that fictitious name; and the arbitrary,

the

the ſanguinary, and the contradictory, portions to leſs-enlightened legiſlators, and to degenerate and mercenary prieſts, acting under their influence. The various detached pieces, of which this vaſt compendium of theology, ethics, and almoſt all the other ſciences, conſiſts, were collected together, we are informed, at a very ancient period, from every part of India, by a great and reputed philoſopher of the name of VYASA, who reduced them into their preſent form, and divided them into four diſtinct books, which are called the Vedas, or books of SCIENCE; for, that, according to Mr. Wilkins, is the proper ſignification of the word Veda. No regular tranſlation of theſe books has yet appeared in any European language; but Sir William Jones has given it as his opinion, that the principal worſhip, inculcated throughout them, is that of *fire*, particularly the *ſolar fire*; and I truſt I have fully proved that the practice of the Hindoos, under the plea of adoring God in that element, is even at this day very ſtrictly conformable to that doctrine. Sir William, in fact, goes beyond this point; for, in the diſcourſe on the literature of the Hindoos, he acquaints us, that " the author of the *Dabiſtan* deſcribes a race of old Perſian

ſages,

ſages, who appear, from the whole of his account, to have been Hindoos; that the book of *Menu*, ſaid to be written in a celeſtial dialect and alluded to by the author, means the Vedas, written in the Devanagari character;* and that, as Zeratuſht was only a reformer, in India may be diſcovered the true ſource of the Perſian religion." While I confeſs my readineſs to bow down to ſuch ſuperior authority, it is neceſſary I ſhould inform the reader, that moſt of the ancient Greek and Roman writers unite with Juſtin in placing the age, in which Zoroaſter lived, much higher in antiquity. Pliny,† in particular, mentions *a Zoroaſter*, who lived "*ſex millibus annorum ante Platonis mortem*;" ſo that probably there were many of that name; and thus both claſſical and Oriental writers may have adhered to the truth in their various accounts. The above quotation from the Aſiatic Reſearches is of conſiderable importance in illuſtrating a ſubject, upon which I am, at

 length,

* Aſiat. Reſearch. vol. i. p. 349.

† Plinii Nat. Hiſt. lib. xxx. c. 1.

Warburton is decidedly for the high antiquity of *Zoroaſter*, and calls all that Prideaux, and conſequently Hyde, has written about him, "an entertaining ſtory, a mere fable." Div. Leg. vol. ii. p. 9, ſecond edition.

length, about to enter; one of the moſt perplexing and difficult in the whole extent of Indian antiquities.

By way of introduction to it, let me remark, that the principal fire-temple, and the uſual reſidence of Zoroaſter and of his royal protector Darius Hyſtaſpes, was at Balkh,* the capital of Bactria, the moſt eaſtern province of Perſia, ſituated on the north-weſt frontiers of India, and not very remote from thoſe mountains, which, in Major Rennel's ſmall map, are diſtinguiſhed by the name of Hindoo-Ko, and which, in claſſic language, are the true Indian Caucaſus. Stationed ſo near the country of the venerable Brachmans, this bold and judicious reformer would hardly fail of viſiting thoſe renowned ſages, and of improving his own theological ſyſtem by the addition of whatever was valuable in the Brachmanian inſtitutes of religion. In reality, we are told, by one of the later hiſtorians of the Roman empire, that Hyſtaſpes † himſelf,

* Hyde's Hiſt. Relig. Vet. Perſ. cap. xxiv. p. 320.

† Hyſtaſpes, qui quum ſuperioris Indiæ ſecreta ſidentius penetraret, ad nemoroſam quandam venerat ſolitudinem, cujus tranquillis ſilentiis præcelſa Bracmanorum ingenia potiuntur; eorumque monitu rationes mundani motus et ſiderum, puroſque ſacrorum ritus, quantum colligere potuit, eruditus, ex his quæ

himſelf, and moſt probably not unattended by the illuſtrious Archimagus, did perſonally penetrate into the ſecluded regions of Upper India, and, in diſguiſe, viſited the deep ſolitudes of the foreſt, amidſt whoſe peaceful ſhades the Brachmans exerciſe their lofty genius in profound ſpeculations, and that he was there inſtructed by them in the principles of the mathematics, aſtronomy, and the pure rites of ſacrifice. Theſe various doctrines, to the utmoſt extent of their inclination to impart, and of his own abilities to retain, he afterwards taught the Magi, all which, together with the ſcience of divination, thoſe Magi traditionally delivered down to poſterity through a long ſucceſſion of ages. That part of India which Hyſtaſpes viſited was, doubtleſs, Caſhmere, where, in all probability, the genuine religion of Brahma flouriſhed longeſt without adulteration, while its purity, in the ſouthern regions, could hardly fail of being polluted, and its ſpirit of degenerating, amidſt the continual influx of foreign nations and of exotic ſuperſtitions, from Egypt, Arabia, and all the neighbouring commercial nations.

 But

quæ didicit, aliqua ſenſibus magorum infudit: quæ illi cum diſciplinis præſentiendi futura, per ſuam quiſque progeniem poſteris ætatibus tradunt. Ammiani Marcellini, lib. 13.

But are there any veſtiges remaining in this happy and ſecluded region of an original ſyſtem of devotion, more refined, more benevolent, more conſiſtent with the profeſſed original principles of Brahma's benign religion, than exiſts any where elſe in India? If there ſhould exiſt any ſuch veſtiges of the firſt legiſlator's genuine and ſublime theology, will they not greatly corroborate the arguments I have advanced, principally on the authority of Sir William Jones, Mr. Wilkins, and Mr. Holwell, of the corruptions introduced into the ancient religion of India by ſubſequent legiſlators and deſigning prieſts of later ages? From the high and reſpectable authority of Abul Fazil, who, ſeveral times, viſited, together with the Emperor Akber, that delightful country, and therefore wrote not from the reports of others, but as an eye-witneſs, I can anſwer that ſuch veſtiges actually *do exiſt there.* In the account which the Ayeen Akbery gives of Caſhmere, there is a very intereſting relation inſerted of a moſt amiable race of religious devotees, who are denominated REYSHEES,* and who are ſaid to be the moſt reſpectable people of that country. Theſe people, according to Abul Fazil, do not ſuffer

* See the account of them in the Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 115.

fuffer themfelves to be fettered by traditions, they revile no fect that may differ from them in religious opinions, nor do they meanly fupplicate alms like the wandering mendicants of the fouth. They abftain from all animal food; they devote their lives to unblemifhed chaftity; and they make it their conftant and benevolent employment to plant the road with fruit-trees for the refrefhment of weary and fainting travellers. Now the word REYSHEE fignifies, in Sanfcreet, a holy perfon; and, in the principles and conduct of thefe devotees, may furely be traced the mild, the beneficent, the uncorrupted, religion of the GREAT BRAHMA.

It may fairly be concluded, that Hyftafpes was incited, by the reprefentation of his friend and counfellor Zoroafter, to pay this private vifit to the Brachmans, and that Zoroafter himfelf had frequently before vifited that "*nemorofam folitudinem*" in which, Marcellinus informs us, they dwelt. It is a conclufion equally fair, that the latter zealoufly copied the manners and habits of living of thofe whofe aufterity and whofe wifdom he fo ardently admired. When, therefore, we find Zoroafter, as he is reprefented by Porphyry, in a paffage which I fhall prefently

give at length, previoufly to his affuming the prophetic character, retiring to the gloom of a lonely CAVERN in Media, and ornamenting that cavern with various aftronomical fymbols and mathematical apparatus, difplaying and imitating what he had there probably feen and been inftructed in, "*Bracmanorum monitu, rationes mundani motus et fiderum*;" when we find him in Perfia, reviving, with additional fplendour, the ancient, but decayed, worfhip of the SUN and of FIRE; efpecially when, upon a more full inveftigation of the matter, we difcover in the mountainous regions of India, which he vifited, that the EXCAVATIONS were equally numerous and prodigious; and, in the very midft of thofe mountains, according to the exprefs words of Abul Fazil,* who had, in all probability, perfonally examined them in his various excurfions with Akber into that neighbourhood, that no lefs than "*twelve thoufand receffes were cut out of the folid rock*, all ornamented with carving and plafter-work, and remarkable for three aftonifhing IDOLS; the firft, reprefenting a man eighty ells in height; the fecond, a woman fifty ells in height; and the third, a gigantic child fifteen ells in height:" when we

* Ayeen Akbery, in the Soobah of Cafhmere, vol. ii. p. 208.

we read that in Caſhmere, after the defection of the inhabitants from their original ſimplicity and purity of worſhip, there were no leſs than "700 places where CARVED figures of a ſerpent," that ancient hieroglyphic emblem of the ſun, were worſhipped: — on a due conſideration of all theſe circumſtances united together, it is impoſſible to avoid ſuppoſing, that, at the period alluded to, the ſecret myſteries, both of the Hindoo religion and the Hindoo ſciences, were performed and taught in the gloom of SUBTERRANEOUS retreats, hollowed for that purpoſe out of the ROCK, and decorated with ſimilar ſculptures and ornaments; that the myſtic rites performed in them were thoſe in honour of elementary FIRE, and that the prevailing religion of the nation was the worſhip of the SUN. This appears to me a more certain clue to guide us through the labyrinth into which we are entering than any other yet deviſed; and with this clue I ſhall proceed to the immediate conſideration of thoſe curious remains of ancient induſtry and genius, which have, through ſo many ages, excited the admiration of travellers and exerciſed the ſpeculations of the learned, in the neighbourhood of the Engliſh ſettlements at Bombay.

SECTION III.

The Caverns of Elephanta and Salſette deſcribed, as well from the moſt eſteemed printed Accounts as from authentic Documents tranſmitted by living Witneſſes to the Author. — The Statues with which they are decorated are, in part, ſymbolical Repreſentations of the ſupreme Deity and his Attributes; and, in part, deceaſed Rajahs exalted to divine Honours for their Virtue and Bravery. — The Species of Superſtition anciently practiſed in theſe Cavern-Pagodas inquired into. — That Worſhip of a phyſical Nature. — Exemplified in the conſtant Appearance of the Phallus, or Lingam, in all the Sacella, or more ſecret Shrines. — And deeply connected with the Sabian or ſidereal Superſtition, ſo widely diffuſed in the moſt early Periods over the Greater Aſia.

INGENUITY hath been tortured, and conjecture exhauſted, by fruitleſs endeavours to diſcover at what periods the ſtupendous caverns,

caverns, at ELEPHANTA and SALSETTE, were hewn from the native rock; the purposes to which they were originally devoted; and the meaning of the hieroglyphic figures sculptured on their walls. While some writers have imagined them to have been places of retreat and security from an invading enemy, others have considered them as the stony sanctuaries of a religion no longer existing; while others, again, with still less probability, have supposed them to have been the hallowed receptacles of the ashes of the more illustrious dead. English and French writers have equally exerted their critical acumen upon this abstruse subject; but both with success by no means proportionate to the labour bestowed in the investigation. M. D'Ancarville* is willing to ascribe them to Semiramis, when she invaded India, whose king, he says, opposed her at the head of elephants covered with mail, and of troops armed with lances, similar to those on the walls of Elephanta; and he quotes Diodorus Siculus to prove that she caused such memorials of herself to be constructed. According to Dr. Fryer, the first Englishman who gives any account of these caverns, the honour of excavating them has

* D'Ancarville, vol. i. p. 121, 124.

has been contended for in favour of Alexander the Great by thofe who thought his army alone equal to the achievement of fo arduous an undertaking; and it is not a little remarkable, that a large and fpirited figure of a horfe, hewn out of the rock on the ifland of Elephanta, is really called the *horfe of Alexander*.* The third opinion, and full as rational as any of the romantic ones before-mentioned, is that which Ovington and other travellers affert the natives themfelves entertain concerning their fabrication; viz. that they were the work of giants and genii in the earlieft ages of the world!

As thefe fubterraneous receffes are admitted to be of the moft profound antiquity; of fuch profound antiquity, indeed, that we are unable to obtain any light concerning the particular æra of their fabrication, either from books or from tradition; yet, as there exifts at the fame time the ftrongeft reafon for fuppofing them to have been originally applied to religious purpofes, it feems to follow, as a neceffary confequence; that in them was practifed the moft ancient fuperftition known to have

* See the account communicated to the Society of Antiquaries, by Alexander Dalrymple, Efq. in the Archæologia, vol. vii. p. 324.

have flouriſhed in Hindoſtan, and that ſuperſtition has been demonſtrated to have been the worſhip of the SOLAR ORB and of FIRE. But, with the principles of their theology, we have obſerved, were deeply blended thoſe of a ſcience which was in that remote period the inſeparable concomitant of every theological ſyſtem, and which, by ſome intelligent writers, is ſuppoſed to have had its origin, and, by all authors, to have arrived at early maturity, in that country. M. Bailly, indeed, in his elaborate treatiſe on the aſtronomy of the ancients, cedes the palm, contended for in honour of India, to Perſia, but only for the ſpace of about a century in priority; and, therefore, the general argument remains in force ſufficient to juſtify my aſſerting, that the principles of that ſcience were once inveſtigated and taught in theſe caverns with all the zeal which inſpired its moſt enthuſiaſtic votaries; while the worſhip of the ſolar orb and of elementary fire was celebrated in them with all thoſe peculiar appendages of pomp and ſolemnity, which ever *accompanied*, and, above all others, *diſtinguiſhed*, that ſplendid ſuperſtition. Without anticipating the arguments, which I intend to adduce in ſupport of this aſſertion, I ſhall firſt preſent to the reader,

reader, as far as verbal defcription can avail, (and forry am I that it is not in my power to accompany that defcription with explanatory engravings adequate to the importance of thefe antiquities,) a general view of the caverns and of the fculptures they contain. I fhall afterwards proceed to that more particular examination of fome of them, upon which I have hazarded certain conjectures concerning the ufe to which the former were applied, and concerning the probable meaning of the latter.

Thefe rocky fhrines, the formation of which Mr. Grofe* fuppofes to have been a labour equal to that of erecting the pyramids of Egypt, are of various height, extent, and depth. They are partitioned out, by the labour of the hammer and the chiffel, into many feparate chambers; and the roof, which in the pagoda of Elephanta is flat, but, in that of Salfette is arched, is fupported by rows of pillars of great thicknefs, and arranged with much regularity. The walls are crowded with gigantic figures of men and women, engaged in various actions, and portrayed in various whimfical attitudes; and they are adorned with feveral evident fymbols

* See Grofe's Voyage to the Eaft Indies, in 1750, p. 92.

ſymbols of the religion now prevailing in India. Above, as in a ſky, once probably adorned with gold and azure, in the ſame manner as Mr. Savary lately obſerved in the ruinous remains of ſome ancient Egyptian temples,* are ſeen floating the children of imagination, genii and dewtahs, in multitudes; and along the cornice, in high relief, are the figures of elephants, horſes, and lions, executed with great accuracy. Two of the principal figures at Salſette are twenty-ſeven feet in height,† and of proportionate magnitude; the very buſt only of the triple-headed deity, in the grand pagoda of Elephanta, meaſures fifteen feet from the baſe to the top of the cap; while the face of another, if Mr. Groſe, who meaſured it, may be credited, is above five feet in length, and of correſponding breadth. Many of theſe figures, however, have been deeply injured by the fury of Mohammedan and Portugueſe invaders of Hindoſtan. When the latter firſt arrived in India, in their rage againſt idolatry, they attempted

* See Savary's Letters on Egypt, vol. i. letter 30, and in p. 451 of the Engliſh edition, printed for Robinſon, in which the references to claſſic authors are more accurately made than even in the original French, and this, therefore, is the edition conſtantly referred to.

† See Archæologia, vol. vii. p. 334.

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tempted to annihilate what they thought were the objects of pagan devotion, by plastering over these valuable remains of antiquity: when the Marattas, afterwards, retook Salsette, to remove that plaster, they fired off some cannon in the pagoda, which unfortunately, together with the plaster, brought down some of the bas-relief. Observing this effect of the discharge, they desisted, and with hammers cleared the figures of their degrading investment; but not without doing material injury to the hands and feet of several. The entrance into most of these caverns is now obstructed by grass and high reeds, which must be burnt before a secure passage can be obtained: they are the resort of the cattle who feed upon that island when annoyed by the intense beams of the sun or wintry tempests, and are not unfrequently visited by wild beasts and venomous reptiles. Captain Hamilton acquaints us, that, upon his entrance into the pagoda of Elephanta,* he discharged a pistol, on purpose to drive away those dangerous visitants, and that, at the sound, a huge serpent, fifteen feet long and two feet thick, issued from his dark recess, which compelled him and his companions to make a precipitate retreat.

* Hamilton's Voyages to the East Indies, vol. i. p. 238.

retreat. One would have ſuppoſed that the conſtruction of ſuch aſtoniſhing works, which have been called the eighth wonder of the world, would have fixed, in any country, an æra never to be forgotten, ſince not only a long period of years muſt have been conſumed, but an infinite number of hands muſt have been employed, in ſcooping out from the living rock ſuch extenſive caverns, and forming, by the ſlow operation of the chiſſel, ſo many and ſuch maſſy columns. It is, however, very remarkable that no ſcrutiny however rigid, no inquiry however diligent, either among the neighbouring Brahmins or thoſe living upon the continent, celebrated for learning and penetration, could ever ſucceed in diſcovering the immediate ſovereign who fabricated them, nor the exact epoch of that fabrication.

Of the various deſcriptions of theſe excavations, all of which lie before me, from the firſt by Linſchoten, in the ſixteenth century, to the lateſt publiſhed in the ſeventh volume of the Archæologia in 1785, thoſe given by Ovington and Mr. Hunter ſeem the moſt accurate among the Engliſh travellers, and thoſe of M. Anquetil de Perron and M. Niebuhr among the foreign viſitants. From theſe au-

thors

thors principally, but with occaſional references to others, is the following more particular account of them ſelected. — Let us begin with Elephanta.

Ovington informs us, that Elephanta* is a ſmall iſland, three leagues diſtant from Bombay, and is thus denominated from the ſtatue of a large elephant cut out of the rock, of which the iſland is compoſed, conſpicuouſly ſtanding on the ſouth ſhore, and which, in the opinion of another traveller,† (Hamilton,) ſo nearly reſembles a real elephant, that, at the diſtance of two hundred yards, " a keen eye might be deceived by the ſimilitude." Ovington alſo deſcribes a horſe, carved in the ſame rock, " ſo lively, and with ſuch a colour and carriage, that many have fancied it a living animal." An engraving of each is given in the volume of the Archæologia‡ cited above; but the elephant, according to Mr. Hunter, a more accurate inſpector of things, is ſplit in two, and there are viſible marks of its having been done by gunpowder, probably by the ſame barbarians who mutilated the figures in the pagoda adjoining. The word

pagoda

* Elephanta, according to De Perron, is called by the natives Gallipouri.

† Hamilton, vol. i. p. 241. ‡ Archæologia, vol. vii. p. 287.

pagoda is formed from the Perſian word *pout*, ſignifying idol, and *ghada*, temple. Thus pagoda means a temple of idols, and, through this interpretation, we come immediately at the meaning of the hieroglyphics.

This aſtoniſhing PANTHEON of the gods, that is, of the *deified heroes and princes of India*, preſents itſelf about half way up the ſteep aſcent of the mountain, from whoſe ſtony boſom it is excavated. Ovington ſtates the dimenſions of this temple at about 120 feet ſquare, and the height at 18 feet, and Niebuhr* agrees with Ovington in reſpect to the height and breadth. The principal entrance is from the north. The enormous maſs of ſolid rock above is ſupported by four rows of pillars of beautiful proportion, but of an order in architecture totally different from that of Greece and Rome. Each column ſtands upon a ſquare pedeſtal, and is finely fluted, but, inſtead of being cylindrical, gradually bulges out towards the centre. The capital is alſo fluted, and is deſcribed by Mr. Hunter as having the appearance of a cuſhion preſſed flat by the weight of the ſuperincumbent mountain. Over the tops of theſe columns there runs a ſtone ridge cut out

 of

* Sa longueur eſt d'environ 120 pieds, et ſa largeur à peu près de même. Voyage en Arabie, tome ii. p. 25.

of the rock, reſembling a beam, about a foot in thickneſs, richly adorned with carved work. Along the ſides of the cavern are ranged thoſe mighty coloſſal ſtatues before-mentioned, to the number of forty or fifty, each of them twelve or fifteen feet in height, of very exact ſymmetry, and, although they are as round and prominent as the life, yet none of them are entirely detached from the main rock. Some of theſe figures have on their heads a kind of helmet of a pyramidal form; others wear crowns rich in devices, and ſplendidly decorated with jewels, while others diſplay only large buſhy ringlets of curled or flowing hair.* Many of them have four hands, many have ſix, and in thoſe hands they graſp ſceptres and ſhields; the ſymbols of juſtice and the enſigns of religion; the weapons of war and the trophies of peace. Some of them have aſpects that inſpire the beholder with terror, and, in the words of Linſchoten, are diſtorted into ſuch "horrible and fearfull formes that they make a man's hayre ſtand upright;" others are diſtinguiſhed by a placid ſerenity and benignity

* Niebuhr has ſtarted rather a ſingular idea upon this ſubject. "On pourroit prendre pour une perruque ce que l'une d'elles à ſur la tête, et conclure de là, que les Européens ne ſont pas les premiers inventeurs de cette coiffure." Voyage en Arabie, tome ii. p. 29.

benignity of countenance; and others betray evident marks of deep dejection and inward anguish. The more conspicuous figures are all gorgeously arrayed after the Indian fashion, with heavy jewels in their ears, with superb collars of precious stones, with belts sumptuously wrought, and with rich bracelets on their arms and wrists. To enter, however, upon a particular description of each figure falls not within the compass either of my intention or of my abilities: the attempt, if practicable, would far exceed the limits within which I have professed to circumscribe this work. I shall confine my observations therefore to two or three of them, which, being more strikingly prominent, particularly attract our notice, and merit more attentive examination.

The first of these is that enormous bust, which is situated on the south side, and directly faces the main entrance of the cave. Mr. Hunter describes this bust as having four heads joined behind the ears; one presenting itself full in front, two in profile, and the fourth concealed from the view by its situation behind that in front. This, however, is an assertion directly contrary to every account I have yet seen, except Mr. Hamilton's, whose

obſervations the ſerpent's appearance prevented from being very correct; and if Mr. Hunter exerted, in this inſtance, his uſual accuracy of examination, it is a circumſtance of great perplexity. M. Niebuhr, however, the moſt faithful delineator of theſe antiquities, mentions but three heads, and particularly ſpecifies this buſt* as exhibiting the repreſentation of the grand triple deity of India, Brahma, Veeſhnu, and Seeva. I conſider the judgment of Niebuhr as corroborated in the higheſt degree even by Mr. Hunter's own deſcription of the ſymbols and aſpect of the three perſonages who compoſe it. Let us, however, firſt conſider his account of the dimenſions of the auguſt viſage in the front. We ſhall ſoon perceive, from its aſtoniſhing depth and breadth, that it was intended for the image of the ſupreme preſiding deity of this hallowed retreat, and that the ſculptor wiſhed to impreſs us, by the ſuperior magnitude of the *buſt only*, with the moſt awful conceptions of his unrivalled pre-eminence in every other point of view. The face in the front meaſures above five

* Cette figure principale eſt un buſte à TROIS TETES, qui apparemment devra repréſenter *Brahma, Viſtnu*, et *Madeo*, ou quelqu'autre divinité, à l'honneur de laquelle on ait bâti ce temple. Voyage en Arabie, tome ii. p. 26.

five feet in length, and the noſe, alone, one foot and a half; the width, from the ear only to the middle of the noſe, is three feet four inches; but the ſtupendous breadth of the whole figure, between the ſhoulders, expands near twenty feet. The towering pyramidal cap of this central head has, in front, a very large jewel; and the caps themſelves of all the three are exquiſitely wrought. Round the neck of the ſame figure is ſuſpended a moſt magnificent broad collar, compoſed of precious ſtones and pearls. This face, Mr. Hunter adds, has a drowſy but placid appearance, which may be ſuppoſed the exact deſcription of that abſorbed ſtate which, it has been before remarked, conſtitutes the ſupreme felicity of the Indian deity. The amiable attribute of the preſerver Veeſhnu is doubtleſs intended to be repreſented by the face on the right, which is arrayed in ſmiles, and looks enamoured on a bunch of flowers, perhaps the ſacred lotos, which its left hand holds up to view. If ever, on the other hand, the dreadful attributes of the deſtroying god Mahadeo were accurately portrayed, are they not evident in the monſtrous, diſtorted, and terrific, features of the remaining aſpect? The eye-brows of that face are contracted into frowns, the ſkin of

the nose is drawn upwards, and the *alce nostri* distended, expressing contempt and indignation. The face, too, is darkened by whiskers, which the others have not, and the tongue is violently thrust out between the teeth. The right hand of this dreadful figure grasps a large hooded snake, which it holds aloft and surveys with a stern look. The snake is about a foot in thickness; and the middle finger of the hand, which grasps it, Mr. Hunter asserts to be three feet and half in length. Another hand, which is now broken off, appears to have had a snake of the same hooded and enormous kind. If, upon future and more accurate examination, this should be discovered to be a quadruple-faced divinity, in that case to whom can it possibly point, but to BRAHME himself, the GREAT ONE, who in the Asiatic Researches* is represented with four majestic aspects; as the god who not only knows, but observes, all things? If the reader will trouble himself to look into the fourth and sixth plate† of Niebuhr, he will observe two figures, decorated in a very conspicuous manner with the zennar, or sacred cord of three threads, which the Brahmins wear: and this circumstance, added

* See an engraving of Brahma in the Asiat. Research. vol. i. p. 243.

† Opposite pages 25 and 27.

added to what has been juſt aſſerted, is a ſufficient refutation of that ill-founded opinion of Mr. Groſe, and other ſuperficial obſervers, that the ſpecies of devotion, now prevailing in Hindoſtan, was different from that originally practiſed in the pagoda of Elephanta. If the head of this buſt, however, ſhould, on farther inquiry, prove to be of a quadruple form, the argument will by no means be overſet; for, both in plate the fifth and in the ſixth, adjoining to the elephant's head, the triple divinity is clearly ſeen, ſeated on a throne ornamented with geeſe, the favourite birds of Sariſwatty, the wife of Brahma. The elephant's head had, moſt probably, the now-effaced body of Ganeſa affixed to it; for, thus is that body ornamented in the engraving of that deity in the Aſiatic Reſearches, to which the reader may advert; and it was judiciouſly placed near the Supreme Being, ſince, both in that authentic volume and in Holwell,* we find that it was the peculiar office of Ganeſa to preſent to the Deity all the oblations and all the devout addreſſes of mankind to their Creator. The elephant's head is the emblem of ſagacity, and he is ſtyled the god of pru-

 dence

* See Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 227; and Holwell, ſecond part, p. 142.

dence and policy. Hence even worldly business of any importance is always commenced by an ejaculation to Ganesa, and he is invoked at the beginning of most Indian books, an instance of which occurs in the Heetopades, translated by Mr. Wilkins, which opens with, *Reverence to Ganesa.* The two majestic whole-length figures, on each side of the grand bust, are both adorned with the thread of Brahma, and are probably intended to represent the priests of that deity. M. Anquetil de Perron, I observe, calls them SUBDARS.

In a temple of Indian deities, who would have expected to have found AN AMAZON? Yet, farther on to the left of the said bust, amidst a group of thirty uncouth statues, conspicuously projects one to whom most writers, and, among them, both Niebuhr* and Hunter, have united in giving that name; and truly she *is an Amazon*, if the general derivation of that word be just;† for, she has no right breast at all, while the left is very large and

* La figure principale de cette grouppe est une femme, qui n'a qu'une mammelle, et qui, peut-être, doit représenter *une Amazone*, P. 27.

† Amazon is supposed to be formed from the privative α and μαζος, *mamma*, or *breast*; for they used to cut off the right breast of the female.

and globular. She has four arms; the right fore-arm refts upon the head of a bull, the left fore-arm hangs down; but what the hand once contained is mutilated, and cannot now be diftinguifhed. The hand of the hinder right-arm grafps a hooded fnake; the left, a round fhield, regularly convex on the outfide, which the ftatue turns towards itfelf. As we have exploded the idea of Semiramis having conftructed thefe caverns, from what quarter could the idea of a figure, like this, enter the head of an Indian fculptor? Herodotus acquaints us, that there were *Scythian Amazons*; and, however chymerical the fyftem may appear, I cannot but fufpect that it arofe from that connection, which, in very early periods, feems to have exifted between the two nations of India and Scythia. Mr. Bryant has indeed combated all the affertions of the ancients concerning the exiftence of fo extraordinary a race; he infifts that the people called Amazons were Cuthite colonies from Egypt and Syria; and, in corroboration of his affertions,* has offered an ingenious derivation of the word *Amazon*, which he would deduce from *Zon*, the Sun, the national object of worfhip among that people. Allowing this derivation of the word

* Analyfis of Ancient Mythology, vol. iii. p. 463.

word *Amazon* to be founded in propriety, her leaning upon the head of a bull, the animal ſacred to the Sun, will appear peculiarly juſt and characteriſtic; while the various crowd of mutilated figures around may be ſuppoſed in the attitudes of devotion, and adorned with the implements of ſacrifice. The whole, however, is an enigma, whoſe real meaning, from the general mutilation prevailing throughout the figures, will never probably be ſolved.

In the pagoda of Elephanta there is another very ſingular and portentous figure, which forcibly arreſts the attention of every obſerver. Its features are diſtorted and furious, like thoſe of Mahadeo before-deſcribed, and its limbs are carved in a gigantic ſtyle. The mouth is wide open, and the whole aſpect is inexpreſſibly ſavage and terrible. This monſtrous ſtatue has eight arms, only ſix of which are perfect. The two uppermoſt of thoſe that remain are extended to their full length, and, over its head, ſupport a wide curtain, or canopy, upon which are ſculptured various figures in a poſture of adoration. One of the right hands graſps a drawn ſabre, the other ſuſtains by the thigh an affrighted infant, with the head hanging downwards, whom the relentleſs monſter ſeems about to deſtroy. We

are

are informed, as well by M. Niebuhr as Mr. Hunter, that, from this circumſtance, many travellers have fancied this piece of mythologic ſculpture to have been intended for a repreſentation of the judgment of Solomon; a conjecture, however, which they both conſider as totally deſtitute of foundation. Of the two left hands, the uppermoſt is charged with a bell, which, ſays Mr. Hunter, is known to be an inſtrument conſtantly uſed in the religious ceremonies of the Gentoos; and the inferior ſupports what Niebuhr* thinks a baſon to catch the blood of the murdered infant, but what Mr. Hunter affirms,† at the time of his viſit to Elephanta, actually contained the mutilated figure of a child, with its face averted from the larger figure, and exceedingly bent; ſo that the head, which it now wants, muſt, when joined to the body, have hung back very low, and have exhibited a frightful ſpectacle. The ſtatue is gorgeouſly dreadful, with a rich collar of pearl, and bracelets of precious ſtones to every arm, and is encircled with a chain of *death-heads*, which evidently point out to us once more the deſtroying power of India, and the

* Le plat devroit ſignifier, qu'il y a reçu le ſang des enfans maſſacrés. P. 30.

† In Archæol. vol. vii. p. 294.

the husband of that CALLEE, the wild music of whose priests, at one of her festivals, brought instantly to the recollection of Sir William Jones the *Scythian* measures* of Diana's adorers in the splendid opera of Iphigenia in Tauris, exhibited by Gluck at Paris. Above and below this colossal statue are several smaller figures, all of whom have horror strikingly painted upon their countenances. To conclude the disgusting similitude, the veil, or canopy, in which the statue seems to conceal itself from view, may, with justice, be considered as figurative, not only of the gloomy and ferocious nature of the rites peculiar to that vindictive deity, but of the awful season in which they were performed; the darkness of that night, which, Mr. Holwell has informed us, is universally devoted to the worship of Callee throughout Hindostan.

If the sacred *zennar* of Brahma, conspicuous upon so many of the figures engraved in the plates of Niebuhr and the Archæologia; if these striking sculptures of the gods, at present adored in India; if the positive assertion of Niebuhr,† that he himself saw the islanders come and pay their devoirs to the deities of this

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 266.

† Voyage en Arabie, tom. ii. p. 32.

this temple; will not convince thoſe of their error, who inſiſt* that a ſpecies of devotion, totally different from that at this day prevailing in India, was anciently practiſed in theſe caverns, let us enter, and ſurvey the ſecret ſanctuary of this magnificent temple, and let us examine what internal evidence that ſurvey may afford to determine the queſtion.

Previouſly to that ſurvey, however, it is neceſſary that the reader ſhould be acquainted with another predominant feature in the Hindoo religion, upon which I have not as yet touched, becauſe, in the firſt place, the ſubject is not the moſt inviting, and, in the ſecond place, becauſe it does not appear to have any foundation in the original Vedas attributed to Brahma, which, throughout, inculcate a reverence for FIRE, as the pureſt ſymbol of the divinity in the whole extended circle of nature. Imaginations leſs pure have conceived, and prieſts leſs abſorbed in mental abſtraction have elevated in the very temples of India, a very groſs repreſentation of the great celeſtial Δημιυργος: they have inſtituted a ſpecies

* Mr. Groſe, who viſited this part of India in 1750, with equal preſumption and ignorance, aſſerts, "that theſe ſculptures bear not the leaſt ſhadow of alluſion to the hiſtory, manners, or worſhip, of the Gentoos."—Groſe's Voyage to the Eaſt Indies, p. 97.

ſpecies of devotion at once degrading to the Creator and diſhonourable to his creatures. This ſpecies of devotion made an early and rapid progreſs among the inferior caſts, but particularly infected the inhabitants of the Peninſula, whoſe manners, like the conſtitution of people ſituated in warmer climates, ſeem to have been ſooner relaxed and depraved than thoſe of their brethren in the northern and leſs enervating regions of Upper India. I will not affirm, though it is far from being improbable, that theſe indecent rites were imported into that Peninſula from Egypt, where the firſt inſtitution of the worſhip of *Ithiphallic* images* is aſſerted, by Diodorus Siculus, to have taken place upon an occaſion which I ſhall hereafter explain, and whence, Herodotus† acquaints us, thoſe rites were carried by Melampus into Greece. For the preſent, I ſhall content myſelf with informing the reader, on the authority of Mr. FORSTER, who has written a conciſe but elegant treatiſe concerning the mythology of the Hindoos, that all the numerous ſects, into which they are divided, are ultimately included under two grand diviſions; the one denominated the *Veeſhnu Bukht*, and the other the *Seeva Bukht*.

The

* Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 15.

† Herodot. lib. ii. p. 123.

The followers of the firſt, Mr. Forſter ſays,* are diſtinguiſhed by marking the forehead with a longitudinal, and thoſe of the ſecond with a parallel, line. As in the great temple of JAGGERNAUT, in Oriſſa, all diſtinctions were laid aſide, and devotees of every caſt, though at other times ſtrictly prohibited from eating together, were permitted to take their food in common: ſo it is not improbable that, at ELEPHANTA, the two great ſects, diſtinguiſhed by the name of Veeſhnu and Seeva, might forget their accuſtomed animoſity, and worſhip their ſeveral deities with equal fervour.

At the weſt end of this grand pagoda is a dark receſs, or SACELLUM, twenty feet ſquare, totally deſtitute of any external ornament, except the altar in the centre, and thoſe gigantic figures which guard the four ſeveral doors that lead into it. Theſe figures, according to Niebuhr, are naked, are eight in number, ſtationed

* This valuable little book is entitled, SKETCHES OF THE MYTHOLOGY AND CUSTOMS OF THE HINDOOS, and was obligingly lent me, with ſome other original publications of an Indian kind, by the ſecretary of the Eaſt-India Company. It was printed in 1785, but never publiſhed. A publication has lately appeared under a ſimilar title, but on a more extenſive ſcale, by Mr. Crauford, an elegant and authentic writer, whoſe obſervations are, in general, the reſult of perſonal inveſtigation upon the ſpot.

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ſtationed on each ſide of every door, and are of the enormous height of thirteen feet and a half; they are all finely ſculptured in high relief, and appear as if ſtarting from the wall to which they are attached. Their heads are decorated in a manner ſimilar to the other ſtatues: they have rich collars round their necks, and jewels of a vaſt ſize in their ears. Of the ſtriking attitude of one of thoſe ſtatues, which remains moſt entire, Mr. Hunter has recorded the following particulars: that the whole weight of the figure ſeems to reſt upon the right leg, while the knee of the left is ſomewhat bent, the right humerus hangs downward parallel to the body, and the fore-arm is bent in ſuch a manner that the hand is oppoſite to the navel, the palm is turned upwards and ſuſtains a GLOBE, and the fingers are bent backwards in a ſtyle that admirably repreſents, or rather makes the ſpectator *feel*, the weight of the ponderous body they ſupport. He adds a judicious remark, that the people, whoever they were, that carved theſe figures, muſt have made conſiderable progreſs in the art of ſtatuary, ſo accurately to have obſerved, and ſo ſucceſsfully to have expreſſed as in many inſtances they have, the alteration which the form of the limbs un-

dergoes

dergoes from muſcular action and external impulſe, as well as the various effects of mental ſenſation upon the human countenance. Theſe formidable guardians of this ſacred receſs point out the uſe to which it was applied and the veneration in which it was holden. It was devoted to the moſt ſacred myſteries of their religion; but our pity and abhorrence are at once excited by the emblem under which they repreſented, in this receſs, the ſupreme Creator. It is indeed an emblem of deity, which was common in the ancient ages of the world, and which, it has been obſerved,* is but too viſible at this day in the various pagodas and paintings of Hindoſtan. It is, in ſhort, the Φαλλος of the Greeks, the PRIAPUS of the Romans, and in India it is called the LINGAM divinity, by which they mean to expreſs the power of the firſt creative energy, by whoſe operations all nature is produced. According to M. Sonnerat,† the profeſſors of this worſhip were of the pureſt principles and the moſt unblemiſhed conduct; and, however offenſive the idea may prove to Europeans, happily educated under different

 impreſſions,

* Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 254.

† Sonnerat, Voy. aux Indes Orient. vol. i. p. 118.

impreſſions, it ſeems never to have entered into the heads of the Indian legiſlator and people, that any thing natural could be groſly obſcene, "a ſingularity," obſerves Sir W. Jones, "which pervades all their writings and converſation, but which is no proof of depravity in their morals!"

A fear of offending the delicacy of my readers would induce me to decline ſaying a word more on the ſubject of a devotion, at which modeſty cannot help revolting; but as, in obedience to the ſtern mandates of truth, I am reluctantly compelled to give the particulars of this receſs, the real purpoſe of which, and the kind of devotion practiſed in it, Mr. Hunter,* from his calling the altar a *mauſoleum*, ſeems not even to have conjectured, I ſhall take the liberty of relating thoſe particulars in the words of Mr. Dalrymple: that account, extracted by Mr. D. from the journal of Capt. Pyke, obſerves that, "all within was open and plain, except that in the centre ſtood a ſquare low altar, on which was placed a large poliſhed ſtone of a cylindrical form, ſtanding on its baſe, but the top was round or convex." Phyſics and mythology, united together, at once formed the hypotheſis

* Archæol. vol. vii. p. 325.

pothesis and fabricated the representative emblem. An attentive survey of the powers of nature and her various modes of operation originally gave birth to that hypothesis; for, according to the philosophy of India, "to *destroy* is only to *generate* and *reproduce* in another way." Hence the god of destruction in this country is holden to preside over generation, as a symbol of which he rides upon a white bull. The name and the various attributes of MAHADEO justify our denominating him at once the Magnus Divus, (which is the literal translation of Mahadeo,) the Jupiter Ultor and the Jupiter Genitor of the Hindoos. His consort is Bhavanee, the Indian Venus, and, in truth, she has produced as many subordinate deities in India as ever Venus did in Greece or Rome. It may here be remarked, that all the Indian deities have wives; by which, when the characters are purely mythological, we are to understand the active powers of their lords; but SEETA, the wife of the great incarnate god RAM, whose unfortunate adventures during her captivity by the giant RAVAN, king of Lanca, engross so large a share of the paintings and ancient historical poems of Hindostan, was probably a real personage, the wife of a rajah of the

ſame name, after his death dignified with divinity for the bravery of his exploits againſt the domeſtic tyrants and foreign invaders of his country.

In metaphyſical ſpeculation alone, I have obſerved, it is poſſible to account for the ſtrange ſpecies of devotion above-mentioned, and that ſtill ſtranger repreſentation of deity; but it is equally poſſible, that they might have originated in the perverted principles of a mind depraved by ſenſual gratifications, and that the argument, uſed in the defence of them, might be poſterior to the eſtabliſhment of the ſuperſtition. Reluctant as I am to appear to follow the example of thoſe who labour to deduce from Egypt every ancient inexplicable cuſtom and every obſcure religious rite of India, yet, of this ſuperſtition at leaſt, ſo diametrically oppoſite to the tenor of the Vedas, and ſo directly congenial with the ITHIPHALLIC rites of Egypt, which in ſucceeding ages were ſo widely diffuſed throughout the earth, I am inclined to think thoſe rites were the grand prototype. The early annals of the latter country record the circumſtances that gave riſe to the inſtitution; and, however deeply blended thoſe circumſtances were with their mythologic fables, yet, in an

inveſtigation

inveſtigation of this nature, it would be improper wholly to omit taking notice of them.

Diodorus Siculus* then relates, that Osiris, after his return from the conqueſt of Aſia, was ſlain by his jealous and enraged brother Typhon, who, after cutting the mangled body into twenty-ſix pieces, diſperſed them in various parts of Egypt. Isis, his affectionate queen, diligently ſought for the diſperſed limbs, which after a long ſearch ſhe found, and committed to the care of the prieſts, inſtituting at the ſame time ſacred rites in honour of her murdered lord. In memory of this eager and tedious ſearch of the diſconſolate queen, at every celebration of the myſtic rites of Iſis and Oſiris, a ſimilar ſearch, with many and bitter lamentations, was affected to be made by the prieſts, and hence that expreſſion of "*Nunquam ſatis quæſitus Oſiris.*" Not all the anxious inquiry of Iſis, however, could for a long time diſcover the genitals of Oſiris, which Typhon had thrown into the Nile. At length the portion of Oſiris miſſing was found, interred with the utmoſt ſolemnity, and, in memory of this recovery, Phalli, or poles, (for, that is the meaning of the word Phalli,) with figures of the male

 pudenda

* Diodori Siculi, lib. i. p. 15.

pudenda faſtened to them, were conſtructed, and ever after carried about in ſolemn proceſſion during the continuance of the feſtival. Athenæus acquaints us,* that Ptolemy Philadelphus, at one of thoſe magnificent feſtivals, diſplayed to the Egyptians a Phallus of gold, richly painted and adorned with golden crowns, a hundred and twenty cubits in length, with a ſtar of burniſhed gold upon the top, the circumference of which was ſix cubits. This was borne aloft, like the other idols, on a ſplendid car, and, like them, received homage from the gazing crowd. This atrocious outrage againſt decency, this abominable mockery of every thing ſacred, under the inſulted name of religion, from Egypt ſpread its infection through all the kingdoms of Aſia, and was carried in Greece to ſuch a pitch of infamous refinement, that, in celebrating the orgies of Bacchus, according to Herodotus,† they fabricated certain obſcene images, a cubit in height, ſo artificially contrived with nerves, that the αἰδοῖον, equal in magnitude to the reſt of the body, might be moved at pleaſure, and theſe images the women (thoſe ſhameleſs φαλλοφεραι) carried about in proceſſion, ſinging all the time the praiſes of

* Athenæi, lib. v. c. 5.

† Herodoti, lib. ii. p. 122.

of Bacchus, and dancing to the ſound of the flute. He then adds, that it was Melampus who firſt introduced among the Greeks the ſacrifices in honour of Bacchus, the pomp of the Phallus, and all the other ceremonies of that Egyptian ſuperſtition. The veſtiges of this ancient and nefarious idolatry are evidently traced in the worſhip of BAAL-PEOR, ſo frequently and loudly inveighed againſt by the prophets in various parts of the ſacred writings. The word *Baal-Peor* is, according to Biſhop Cumberland, derived from two Chaldee primitives, the former ſignifying *God*, and PEOR, or PAYAR, *denudare*, which he would literally tranſlate the god PRIAPUS,* that obſcene deity, born and venerated at Lampſachus, whence he is often ſo denominated, and concerning whoſe hiſtory and office the reader, if he chooſes, may conſult Horace,† Ovid, and the other licentious Roman poets.

I am unwilling to dwell upon this indelicate topic, which however is intimately connected with the ſubject of which I treat; but there appears to be ſo ſtriking a reſemblance

 between

* Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 75.

† Hor. lib. i. ſat. viii. v. 3.

between a paſſage in a profane writer,* who relates the cauſe of the firſt inſtitution of the feſtival, called PHALLICA, at Athens, and one in the ſacred volumes, that the curious reader will, I am confident, pardon the protraction, eſpecially as I ſhall afterwards prove, that a cuſtom, ſimilar to that alluded to, at this day exiſts in India. Pegaſus, a native of Eleutheris, in Bœotia, having brought to Athens ſome ſtatues of Bacchus, was treated by the Athenians with the utmoſt contempt and ridicule. The deity, indignant at the inſult, in revenge, ſent among them an epidemic diſeaſe of a nature that peculiarly affected thoſe parts which modeſty forbids to name. On conſulting the oracle upon the beſt method of preventing the farther extenſion of ſo grievous a malady, they were recommended publicly to receive Bacchus into their city in all the pomp of his worſhip. The oracle was obeyed; and, amidſt other ſplendid trophies, to appeaſe the incenſed divinity, were diſplayed THYRSI, with the figures of the parts affected bound to the end of them. The great critic,

* For an account of the eſtabliſhment of the Phallica, ſee the "Acharnenſes" of Ariſtophanes, act. ii. ſc. 1. and the Scholiaſt upon the paſſage.

critic, M. Bochart, and our Biſhop Patrick*
after him, aſſert the whole of this relation to
be a direct forgery from a paſſage in Samuel,
where the Philiſtines, having taken and violated the *ark of the God of Iſrael*, are ſmitten
with emerods, a diſtemper, concerning the
exact nature of which the commentators are
not fully agreed, but which, from the text of
verſe 9, was doubtleſs of a ſimilar nature with
that before-mentioned. On inquiry of the
prieſts, with what treſpaſs-offering the God
of Iſrael might be appeaſed, they are deſired,
among other things, to prepare five golden
emerods, according to the number of the principal cities of Philiſtia, and dedicate them to
the God of Iſrael; which mandate when they
had obeyed, the diſtemper ceaſed to make
farther ravages among them. The ſimilarity
in theſe two accounts is ſingularly ſtriking;
but there ſeems to be no neceſſity that the
one ſhould be a forgery from the other, as
thoſe learned gentlemen have aſſerted, eſpecially ſince it is acknowledged by both, that
the ancient heathens conſecrated to their gods
ſuch memorials of their deliverance as beſt
repreſented the evils from which they were
liberated;

* See Bochart's Canaan, lib. i. cap. 18. Biſhop Patrick's Commentary on Sam. I. cap. vi. ver. 1.

liberated; and, in fact, among the Hindoos, according to Tavernier, it is a custom at this day, that, when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he should bring the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his rank and ability, as an offering to the god.* But what the reader will probably think still more singular is, that the worship of the Lingham God is attempted to be explained in the very same way by a Hindoo writer, quoted in the SKETCHES, published by Mr. Crauford, which the reader may see there at length, and of which the following is only the outline, viz. That Seevah, incensed against a certain race of devotees, who, under the external appearance of sanctity and austerity, practised secretly the most infamous vices, descended from heaven to punish and expose the hypocritic race. The event was, that, their impiety being as bold as their hypocrisy was base, they attempted to cope with the god of terrors, and by horrible incantations produced a tiger, whose mouth expanded like a cavern, and whose voice resembled thunder, which they sent against the god, who slew the monster

* See Voyage aux Indes par I. B. Tavernier, tome iii. p. 227, edit. à Rouen, 1713.

monſter with one blow of his club, and then, like another Hercules, covered himſelf with his ſkin. Every other effort to revenge themſelves upon Seevah failing, they, by the ſufferance of heaven, ſent a conſuming fire to deſtroy the genitals of that god, who, we have ſeen, is the ſupreme regenerative power of nature. " Seevah, enraged at this attempt, turned the fire with indignation againſt the human race, and mankind would ſoon have been deſtroyed, had not the preſerver Veeſhnu, alarmed at the danger, implored him to ſuſpend his wrath. At his intreaties Seevah relented. But it was ordained, that, in his temples, thoſe parts ſhould be worſhipped, which the falſe devotees had impiouſly attempted to deſtroy."* This ſtory is an evident compound of allegory and phyſics, as are all thoſe of Egyptian origin that relate to this curious worſhip. In fact, the pride of the philoſopher would fain explain away, by argument, the groſſneſs of a devotion ſo degrading to the dignity of human nature. While I again aſſert my belief, that it came from Egypt to India, I at the ſame time declare my conviction, that it originally flowed neither from Seevah, nor Oſiris, nor any other

* SKETCHES relating to the Cuſtoms of the Hindoos, p. 177.

other fabulous divinity, but from that abandoned HAM, the JUPITER HAMMON of the Egyptians, their firſt god and firſt monarch, from whom the whole country in Scripture is often denominated the land of Ham; from that Ham, who, according to the ſenſe of the word PEOR, above-mentioned, was guilty of the horrible enormity of expoſing and deriding the nakedneſs of an aged father, and the baſe rites of whoſe proſtituted religion are, by the juſt decrees of Providence, ſtamped with that eternal brand of reproach, that HIEROGLYPHIC SYMBOL of his crime, which is ſo well calculated to impreſs upon the minds of men, and keep alive the memory of that primæval turpitude committed by the moſt ancient idolater and the earlieſt tyrant after the deluge.

I ſhall now proceed with the reader to take a general view of the more numerous, and not leſs aſtoniſhing, excavations of CANARAH, in the iſland of SALSETTE. SALSETTE is a large and fertile iſland, ſeparated from BOMBAY by only a narrow channel, and is ſeventy miles in circumference, twenty in length, and fifteen in breadth. Of theſe excavations the moſt recent and authentic accounts are to be found in the ſame volume of the Archæologia

above

above referred to, extracted by Mr. Lethieullier from the papers of Charles Boon, Esq. governor of Bombay, and in the preliminary discourse of M. Anquetil de Perron to his famous Zend-avesta. The relations of these gentlemen will be our safest guide amidst a labyrinth of mythology, where we shall not have the advantage of M. Niebuhr's accurate and explanatory engravings. M. Niebuhr, when in India, was deterred, as he himself informs us, from visiting Salsette, which was at that period in the hands of the Marattas, by some differences which had recently arisen between the English and that nation.

Governor Boon, laudably employing the power which he derived from his high station to promote the purposes of knowledge, ordered exact drawings to be made, upon the spot, of the principal pagodas and of the more striking figures on this island. These drawings were seven in number, but were never made public; they formed part of the collection of Mr. Lethieullier; and, on that gentleman's decease, were purchased for the additional enrichment of the private library of the king; a library, which, for the number of scarce and valuable books and manu-

scripts

ſcripts it contains, cannot be rivalled by that of any ſovereign in Europe, and may be called truly royal. I have denominated theſe excavations numerous and aſtoniſhing; and ſo the reader will undoubtedly think them, when he is informed, that, according to the repreſentation of Gemelli Careri, who diſtinctly enumerates them, the figures of idols alone amounted to above ſix hundred in number, ninety of them in and about the great pagoda, which he tells us may be eſteemed the greateſt wonder of Aſia; and adds, that the perſon, who took the draughts for Governor Boon, declared he was ſo ſtruck with the magnitude of that ſtupendous work, that, " when he attentively conſidered the whole, he did not doubt but it muſt have coſt the labour of forty thouſand men for forty years together."

Near the centre of the iſland, and emboſomed in extenſive woods, which are the haunt of lions, tigers, and other wild and venomous animals, riſe four very ſteep and contiguous hills, exhibiting at a diſtance the aſpect of one entire rock, and bearing on their ſurface ſtrong marks of calcination.* It is on the ſides of theſe hills that the caverns are hewn, and, from the reſemblance of the whole

to

* Archæologia, vol. vii. p. 333.

to a vaſt city of ſtone, as well as from the village of Canarah adjoining, the excavations are denominated by the natives "the city of Canarah."* With this reſemblance, Linſchotten, who paid this iſland a viſit at ſo early a period as the year 1759, was ſo ſtruck, that, throughout his relation, he talks of it as of a town, and calls the excavated apartments *chambers* and *houſes*. He deſcribes the front as carved into ſtories or galleries, leading to ſo many ſeparate ranges of apartments, all cut out of the live rock, and riſing ſucceſſively above each other, "ſo that, to be briefe, all the chambers and houſes within this compaſſe, or four galleries, are three hundred, and entirely full of carved pagodes, of ſo fearfull, horrible, and develiſh, formes and ſhapes, that it is wonderful to behold." To give any very minute deſcription of theſe ſculptures is incompatible with my propoſed plan; it will, for the preſent, be ſufficient to remark, that theſe ſeparate apartments have in general an interior receſs, or ſanctuary, and a ſmall tank, or reſervoir of water, for the performance of ablutions. In moſt of theſe receſſes is diſplayed the degrading repreſentation of deity before alluded to, "the cylindric ſtone," deſcribed

* Linſchotten, b. i. c. 44, edit. 1598.

ſcribed by Mr. Dalrymple, "the conic marble," mentioned in the Aſiatic Reſearches,* and often in union, that ſhocks the eye of modeſty, the too evident emblems of the male and female organs of generation.

It is the weſtern hill, which, according to Governor Boon's account, more particularly challenges attention, ſince it contains the chief pagoda of the iſland: in its altitude, but not in its extent and breadth, this pagoda far exceeds that of Elephanta, "being forty feet high† to the crown of the arch, eighty-four feet long, and forty-ſix broad." The veſtibule, or portico, is proportionably large and ſpacious, and it is adorned with two ſtately columns finiſhed with capitals and a baſe. It is in this portico that the two ſurpriſing coloſſal ſtatues above-mentioned, twenty-ſeven feet in height and of excellent proportion, are ſtationed, one on each ſide, immediately before the entrance into the grand temple; they are adorned with mitre-caps and ear-rings, after the Indian faſhion; and, to Mr. Boon's artiſt, they ſeemed to have been anciently painted, by the tints of blue and vermilion which yet remained upon them. The portico itſelf has alſo one very magnificent gate, and two others of

* Aſiat. Reſearch. vol. i. p. 254. † Archæol. vol. vii. p. 335.

of inferior magnitude. The ſuperior grandeur of this pagoda ſeems to ariſe not only from the height of the roof, but from the circumſtance of its being in the form of an arch, whereas that of Elephanta offends the eye, both by its lowneſs and its flatneſs. This arched roof is ſupported by thirty-five maſſy pillars, extremely beautiful conſidering their antiquity, of an octagonal form, and about five feet in diameter; the capitals and baſes of each being ornamented with figures of elephants, horſes, tigers, &c. executed with great ſkill and exactneſs. Two rows of cavities, regularly placed, are viſible round the walls of the temple, for the inſertion of thoſe lamps, which, probably, were kept for ever burning in this gloomy and ſacred retreat; but what in a more particular manner, at the very entrance of the temple, irreſiſtibly impreſſes the mind of the beholder with the moſt awful conceptions of its former magnificent worſhip, is the ſtupendous altar at the farther end of the temple, of a convex form, twenty-ſeven feet in height and twenty in diameter! Round this high offertory, at certain diſtances, are receſſes for lamps, and, directly over it, expands a vaſt concave dome. From theſe numerous and conſpicuous receſſes for

lamps, from the general poſition of theſe altars towards the *eaſtern* quarter of the pagoda, from the evidence already brought of the general prevalence among the Hindoos in ancient æras of the worſhip of the ſun and of fire, it can hardly be doubted, but that this ſpecies of devotion, deriving perhaps additional ſtrength from the viſible emblem of the deity, whoſe throne was ſuppoſed to be fixed in the ſun, blazed forth in this temple in the fulneſs of its meridian ſplendour. Shall I be thought to have violated all the bounds of probability, if I advance one ſtep farther in conjecture, and offer to the public the novel, yet ſurely not incredible, ſuppoſition, that the pagodas, both of Elephanta and Salſette, were of that kind of ſubterraneous retreats, hewn out of the ſolid rock, which were ſo common in Perſia, devoted to the ſplendid rites of MITHRA, and from that deity denominated MITHRATIC CAVES? In thoſe caves they kept a portion of the ſacred fire conſtantly and fervently glowing. The radiant and ſpotleſs image of celeſtial brightneſs and purity was never ſuffered to be extinguiſhed, nor even to emit a languid ray, but continually aſcended in a pure bright pyramid of flame, fed with the richeſt gums,

with

with the moſt fragrant oils, and with the moſt coſtly perfumes of the Eaſt.

PORPHYRY, in his admirable treatiſe, *De Antro Nympharum*, treats at large of theſe Mithratic caves, of the doctrines taught and the worſhip celebrated in them; he expreſsly ſays,* "that the moſt ancient of the human race, before they were ſufficiently ſkilled in architecture to erect temples, conſecrated cells and caverns to the Deity;" and what is more particularly to our purpoſe, he adds, *πανταχȣ δε οπȣ τον* ΜΙΘΡΑΝ *εγνωσαν, δια σπηλαιȣ τον θεον ιλεȣμενων*, that is, whereſoever men acknowledged MITHRA as the ſupreme divinity, they performed the ſacred rites in caverns. This account indeed appears inconſiſtent with what we read of the PYRÆIA, or fire-temples, which were generally erected on the ſummits of mountains; but theſe are of far later date than the periods to which Porphyry alludes, and owed their origin, according to the magi, to the zeal of Zoroaſter, to preſerve the ſacred flame, which deſcended from heaven, from extinction by the tempeſtuous violence of ſtorms and rain. But theſe caverns were not only the temple of the moſt ſplendid religion,

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* Porphyrius in Antro Nympharum, p. 263. Cantabrigiæ, 1655.

gion, they were the ſolemn ſchools of the ſublimeſt ſciences inculcated in thoſe early ages of the world. What was the ſcience principally inculcated in them, beſides theology, we may learn from the ſame Porphyry in his deſcription of the cave of Zoroaſter: that it was conſecrated to the honour of MITHRA, the parent of the univerſe; that the cave repreſented the world created by MITHRA; and that the elements of nature and the various quarters of that world were repreſented by different ſymbols properly diſpoſed around it. The SUN was probably repreſented by a ſphere of gold, or ſome reſplendent gem of immenſe value ſuſpended aloft, and the roof glittering with gold and azure, and with well-imitated repreſentations of the celeſtial bodies, inſpired the enthuſiaſtic ſoul of the Brahmin as well with the moſt elevated conceptions of his own religion as of the high dignity of his diſtinguiſhed order. If the ſcenes of the SACONTALA* be picturеſque of the manners of the times in which that drama was written, there cannot be entertained a doubt, but that, upon certain occaſions, alſo in thoſe caverns were practiſed the moſt myſterious rites of MAGIC, and

* "Who, like the choleric DURVASAS, has power to conſume, like raging fire, whatever offends him?" Sacont. p. 40.

and that they ſometimes echoed with the moſt tremendous incantations.

The aſſertion of PORPHYRY, relative to the original purpoſe to which the MITHRATIC CAVES were applied, is ſtrongly corroborated by a paſſage in CELSUS, quoted by Origen, where that learned writer informs us, that, in the rites of MITHRA, the Perſians repreſented by ſymbols the two-fold motion of the ſtars, the fixed and the planetary, and the paſſage of the ſoul through them. By way of illuſtrating this doctrine of the ſidereal Metempſychoſis, " they erected in their caves a high ladder, on the aſcent of which were ſeven different gates, according with the number of the planets; the firſt gate was of *lead*, which was intended to mark the ſlow motion of the planet SATURN; the ſecond gate was compoſed of *tin*, by which they ſhadowed out the brilliancy and ſoftneſs of VENUS; the third gate was of *braſs*, which they imagined a juſt emblem of the ſolidity and durability of JUPITER; the fourth gate was of *iron*, by which MERCURY was typified, becauſe he is ſuited, like iron, to all ſorts of labours, whence profit may be derived; the fifth gate conſiſted of a *mixed maſs*, of which the heterogeneous compoſition, variableneſs, and irregularity, ren-

 dered

dered it the fit emblem of MARS; the ſixth gate was of *ſilver*, exhibiting an apt ſimilitude of the mild radiance of the ſilver empreſs of THE NIGHT; and the *ſeventh* was of *gold*, a proper emblem of the SUN, the one being the king of metals, and the other being the ſovereign of the ſky." I muſt again repeat, that this notion, of the orbs of heaven being *animate intelligences*, was intimately blended with the moſt ancient ſuperſtition of the earth;* we find it particularly predominant in the Phœnician Coſmogony of TAUT, which aſſerted their ZOPHESAMIN, or the *Overſeers* of Heaven, to be thus animated,† and the reader will remember a remark quoted before from the Ayeen Akbery,‡ that many of the ancient Hindoo philoſophers believed "that the ſtars were the ſouls of men departed this life, and raiſed to that high dignity in reward for their virtues and auſterities."

It was then in periods when the ſolar worſhip, in this part of Aſia, flouriſhed in the zenith of its glory, that THESE CAVERNS were ſcooped out of the native rock, with that indefatigable

* Celſus apud Origen contra Celſum, lib. iv.

† Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 42.

‡ Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 11.

defatigable labour and with that perſevering patience which devotion could alone have inſpired, and which the hopes of eternal reward could alone have ſupported. It was in theſe ſolemn retreats of religion and philoſophy, that the contemplative and *abſorbed ſoul* approached neareſt to the perfection of the divine nature. It was *here* that the bright emblem of the divinity beamed forth a luſtre inſupportably reſplendent and powerful; but particularly at that awful ſeaſon, when the world was deprived of the bleſſing of the living ſolar orb, and when nature lay buried in profound ſilence and in midnight darkneſs. If, as Mr. Hamilton informs us,* from ocular ſurvey, no leſs than a hundred lamps were preſerved inceſſantly burning before the idol JAGGERNAUT, how many thouſand muſt have been lighted up in the extenſive caverns of Salſette and Elephanta? It is probable, that in the day-time the Brahmins mounted the eminences of their rocks, and paid their devotions on the ſummits of the loftieſt mountains. They aſcended the heights of Salſette, as the Egyptian prieſts of old aſcended the apex of the pyramids, *to adore the Sun, and to make aſtronomical obſervations.* Accordingly, we are

 informed,

* Hamilton's Voyage, vol. i. p. 385.

informed, by ſome accurate obſervers, that, from the eminence of the rocky ſteep of CANARAH, to which there is a regular aſcent of ſteps cut out of the rock, a proſpect opens itſelf beyond deſcription beautiful and extenſive, and that it is an eminence not to be looked down from without terror. M. Anquetil expreſsly ſays, that, to him, one of the mountains of Canarah ſeemed to be hewn to a point by human art, undoubtedly from the ſame religious impulſe that dictated the form of the pyramids of Egypt, which the learned Greaves inſiſts were not *ſepulchres*, as has been generally ſuppoſed, but ſtupendous temples,* erected to OSIRIS, the Egyptian appellation of the Sun, the Egyptians imitating in their fabrication of them the model of the ſolar ray, and the uſual form under which the Deity was in the moſt ancient times worſhipped. They were indeed denominated pyramids απο τȣ πυρος, from the figure of a flame of fire; and a ſuperſtition, congenial with their name, was once undoubtedly practiſed in their gloomy retreats. When the immediate object of their veneration was loſt to their view, the Brahmin devotees deſcended with the ſhades of evening into their ſtony

* See an account of a viſit to Canarah, by ſome members of the council of Bombay, inſerted in M. Anquetil's account.

ſtony receſſes, and *there* renewed (before objects emblematical of his apparent figure, power, and properties) their fervent adoration. THE ORB OF RADIATED GOLD, THE BRIGHT SPIRAL FLAME, aſcending from the ever-glowing altar, impreſſed their inmoſt ſouls with an awful ſenſe of the preſent Deity. The planetary train was repreſented by images equally emblematical of their ſuppoſed form and influence, and the ſigns of the zodiac blazed in imitative gold round the emboſſed and vaulted roof. Imagination cannot avoid kindling at the ſcene, and it is difficult to refrain from ruſhing into the enthuſiaſm of poetry, while we take a review of the probable ſplendour and magnificence of this ancient ſpecies of devotion. All the caverns might truly be called PYRÆIA, or ſanctuaries that cheriſhed the eternal flame. The whole circumference of the rock was illumined and the mountain burned with fire! Throughout all the deep receſſes of its caverns, for ever reverberated the echoes of the hallowed CONQUE OF SACRIFICE. Around all the ſhores of the iſland, THE SACRED BELL of religion inceſſantly rang. The ſecret gloom of thoſe majeſtic foreſts, that ſurrounded the rock, perpetually reſounded with the MYSTIC SONG of prayer and thankſgiving.

One

One order of priefts, arrayed in veftments of WOVEN BARK,* and having on their heads thofe pyramidal caps, which equally diftinguifhed the Indian and the Egyptian priefts, and which, M. Savary informs us, are at this day worn by the latter, attended to watch the never-dying flame, and invigorated it by the frequent injection of precious gums and aromatic woods. Another order of priefts was employed in preparing the various facrifices. Some were occupied in inftructing the younger Brahmins in the profound arcana of thofe more abftrufe fciences, of which the numerous emblems on every fide fo confpicuoufly attracted the attention; while others again were initiating them into the myfterious rites of that religion, of which the principal deities were fculptured on the walls of their caverns. No doubt many of thofe fculptures, which cannot now be explained, fhadow out the facred hiftory of the Indian religion as well as the heroic feats of the ancient rajahs. They may exhibit the contentions of the benevolent and malignant Dewtahs. They may difplay the triumphs of perfevering piety over vice armed with giant terrors, and of juftice over oppreffion, though throned in the plenitude of its

* See the SACONTALA throughout.

its power, and arrayed in all the gorgeous enſigns of uſurped ſovereignty. This appears to me the moſt certain clue to the explanation of the greateſt part of the carved imagery; and exactly in this manner were the innumerable mythologic figures that crowd the walls of ELORA, near Dowletabad, explained to M. Anquetil by the two Brahmins who attended him thither for the purpoſe of throwing light upon this obſcure ſubject. Mr. Dalrymple's account, in the Archæologia, greatly ſtrengthens this conjecture; for, the writer clearly diſcovered "the effigies of great perſons compelling their ſubjects to obedience; others executing juſtice; others, as he conceived, by the mildneſs of their aſpect, ſhewing tenderneſs in their admonitions; and others again exhibiting inſtances of their proud proweſs in arms." While virtue and ſcience kindled at theſe examples ever preſent to their view, while devotion was animated by the awful preſence of the deities addreſſed, how ardent muſt have been the throb for diſtinction which the former felt, how energic the ejaculations of the latter! Every tongue uttered the dictates of wiſdom, and every heart bounded with the tranſports of religion.

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TIME DAYS

SECTION IV.

The Parallel between the phyfical and fymbolical Superftition of India and Egypt commenced, preparatory to a more extenfive Survey in a future Section.—The Origin and Hiftory of Hieroglyphic Defignation. — Thofe of India and Egypt compared.—Have nearly all an aftronomical Allufion.—The principal Deities of either Country and their Functions compared.—The Cavern-Rites of Mithra practifed in both.—A ftupendous Excavation in the Thebais, with a Sacrifice to the Sun fculptured on the Walls.—The Whole to be referred to a Chaldaic and Sabian Origin.

LEST the affertions in the preceding pages fhould appear to fome of my readers to be of too general a nature, and left I fhould be fuppofed to have fubftituted eloquent declamation in the place of hiftorical fact, I muft now intreat their permiffion to defcend to certain particulars, that will elucidate what has

has been there obſerved; and conſider the firſt origin, primitive intent, and progreſſive improvement, of HIEROGLYPHIC SCIENCE. The ſubject, as it relates to India, has never before been extenſively diſcuſſed; and, if their patience be not totally exhauſted, ſome intereſting matter will perhaps occur, in the courſe of the inveſtigation, to gratify curioſity and reward attention.

That many of the hieroglyphic ſculptures in the caverns of Salſette and Elephanta bear a reference to the aſtronomical as well as to the mythological notions prevailing in India, cannot be doubted by any body who conſiders how intimately, in the ancient world, theſe ſciences were connected, or rather that their mythology, in a great degree, reſted upon the baſis of their wild aſtronomical ſpeculations. It has been aſſerted by the ancients, and the aſſertion has been received with implicit confidence by the moderns, that HIEROGLYPHICS were invented, by the prieſts of Egypt, to ſhade, under a veil of impenetrable myſtery, the ſublime arcana of their theology and philoſophy; that theſe hieroglyphic, or allegorical, characters were the firſt-written language of mankind, and were the undoubted origin of alphabetical letters. Hence Kircher on this ſubject declares,

declares, *De primævis Egyptiorum litteris variæ diversorum sunt opiniones. Omnes tamen in hoc consentiunt, plerasque ex sacrorum animalium forma, incessu aliarumque corporis partium situs et symmetria desumptas.** A writer of the present century, however, not inferior in genius to the most learned of the ancients, who has devoted the greater part of his second volume of the Divine Legation of Moses to the elucidation of the obscure history of hieroglyphics, and, in particular, of those of Egypt, to which country our subject at present naturally directs our attention, strenuously contends, that emblematic painting was the first as well as readiest method which mankind adopted to communicate their conceptions to each other. He exemplifies his new theory by exhibiting an engraving† of a Mexican picture, copied from Purchase, which contains the history of an ancient king of Mexico, during a period of fifty-one years, highly curious and full of emblematic figures. He corroborates that theory by affirming, from a Spanish writer, that, when the inhabitants of the coast of South America sent expresses to Montezuma

* Œdip. Ægypt. vol. iii. p. 42.

† See that engraving, vol. ii. p. 67, of the Divine Legation of Moses, demonstrated.

Montezuma concerning their firſt invaſion of the Spaniards, their advices were delineated in large paintings upon cloth. Hieroglyphic figures of animals and other objects, in imitation of thoſe paintings, he repreſents as the next gradation in the mode of communicating information; and, when theſe were eſtabliſhed, though he will not allow them to have been *invented*, he admits them to have been *employed*, by the artful policy of the Egyptian prieſts, for the purpoſe of concealing the more ſacred myſteries of their ſuperſtition, as well from the eyes of the vulgar among their own countrymen as from the ſcrutinizing curioſity of learned foreigners. Whatever might have been the real origin of hieroglyphics, and this ſeems to be the moſt rational account of it, the ſame policy, in order to render them more auguſt and venerable, led thoſe prieſts to repreſent them as fabricated by the immediate inſpiration of the gods, whoſe rites and myſteries they typified. The ſtupendous ſyſtem of the Egyptian religion and ſciences ſoon became involved in the holy gloom of hieroglyphics. The veſtibules, the walls, the roofs, of their temples, were covered with theſe myſtic ſymbols, ſhadowing out, under the

figures

figures of animals and other expreſſive emblems; the hiſtory of their greater and tutelary deities, as well as that of their kings and legiſlators, and indicative of the revolutions and influences of the hoſt of heaven. As in the Egyptian ſo in the Hindoo temples, near to the deity were generally placed the animals ſacred to that deity, which, gradually becoming his repreſentative ſymbol upon earth, in time ſucceeded throughout Egypt to the honours the deity enjoyed, and, even in India, were honoured with reſpect bordering upon veneration. On this point I cannot help agreeing with Shuckford, in oppoſition to Warburton, that here we may plainly diſcover the origin of that worſhip, ſo degrading to human nature, which was paid in ancient pagan times to the brute creation; but, as that kind of worſhip was never very predominant in Hindoſtan, I ſhall not particularly enlarge upon the ſubject, though ſome of its ſtriking features will naturally meet our views in the courſe of this inveſtigation. Thus, in the former country, the Apis was the known ſymbol of *Oſiris*, and was accordingly worſhipped. The White Bull, according to Sir William Jones, is the animal on

on which *Seeva** is represented in the Indian pagodas; and this may be one cause of the general homage paid to that animal in Hindostan, although, take away the allegory, and it will be found, that both are only venerated for their great use in agriculture. A *cat* was in Egypt considered as a symbol of the *moon*, and Plutarch† gives this curious philosophical reason for it; they thought that the contraction and the dilatation of the eye of that animal afforded a just emblem of the increase and decrease of the moon's orb. The representa-

 tive

* Casting my eye, during the period of writing this dissertation, upon Mr. Costard's laborious attempt to trace, to Oriental primitives, the Greek names of the several planets; I observe, that, in examining the appellation Ζευς, or JUPITER, he produces two Chaldee verbs, which he translates *Sevah* and *Seve*, signifying *to exult for joy;* either of which, he says, might be its possible radix. He then traces the same word to an equally possible radix in Arabic, which he writes *du* or *dsu*, signifying Lord, or one that possesses; with which, he adds, "very nearly agrees the *dyu* of the Welsh, the *deu* of the Cornish, and the *deus* of the Latins;" to which may probably be added the *div* of the Hindoos. This name Mr. Costard thinks might suit the character of the prince, but the name of the *planet* he would deduce from *dha*, lux, lumen, splendor, which might be the primary meaning of the Chaldee *Sevah*. If the above derivation be not too far-fetched, it will help to unravel the history of this god, who, we have before observed, has been denominated the *Jupiter Genitor* of India. Costard's Astronomy, p. 193.

† Plutarch in his Treatise de Iside et Osiride, p. 360, which treatise developes all the complicated mysteries of that worship.

tive ſymbol of the moon in India, according to the Heetopades * and Mr. Wilkins, is a *rabbit*, which animal conſtantly ornaments the right hand of the repreſentative images of that deity, drawn or ſculptured in the pagodas. A ſerpent was adored in Egypt as the emblem of the divine nature; not only, ſays Warburton, " on account of its great vigour and ſpirit, but of its extended age and revireſcence;" and we have obſerved from the Ayeen Akbery, that, in Caſhmere, there were no leſs than ſeven hundred places, where carved figures of ſnakes were worſhipped. Indeed almoſt all the deities in Salſette and Elephanta either graſp ſerpents in their hands or are environed with them, which can only be intended as a mark of their divinity. They are alſo ſculptured on the cornices ſurrounding the roofs of thoſe caverns and the more modern pagodas; a circumſtance which reminds me of another uſe to which ſerpents were applied in the ſymbols of Egypt; for, their wreathed bodies, in its hieroglyphic ſculpture, repreſented the oblique courſe of the ſtars, while the ſame bodies, formed into a circle, were an emblem of eternity; and it will be remembered, that the ſerpent was one

of

* See Heetopades, p. 177, and note.

of the moſt conſpicuous of the forty-eight great conſtellations, into which the ancients divided the viſible heavens. On thoſe cornices too, in emboſſed work, are ſeen very conſpicuous figures of horſes, elephants, and lions, three of the moſt diſtinguiſhed conſtellations of the Hindoos; the two former of which ſtand foremoſt in order among thoſe enumerated in Mr. Coſtard's table* of the twenty-ſeven conſtellations, of which the zodiac of the Indians conſiſts, called ACHEVINI and BARANI; literally, the horſe and the elephant: while the third, or SING, is that favourite ſign of the ſame zodiac, which gives the additional honour of its name to that of every brave rajah, who chooſes to be diſtinguiſhed on the roll of fame for poſſeſſing the fortitude of a LION.† Theſe ſymbolic animals probably, in the ancient mythological ſyſtem, repreſented the renowned hero-deities of India in the ſame manner as in Egypt the god Orus was recogniſed in Orion, Anubis in Sirius, or the Dog-ſtar, Typho in Urſa Major, or the Bear, and Nephthe in Draco, or the Dragon. It was this cloſe union of the Hindoo theology and aſtronomy which deceived that elegant and judicious hiſtorian, Mr.

 Orme,

* Coſtard's ASTRON. p. 5.

† As CHEYT SING.

Orme,* when he declared, that the hiſtory of their gods was a heap of the greateſt abſurdities. "It is, ſays he, Eſwara twiſting off the neck of Brahma; it is the Sun who gets his teeth knocked out, and the Moon who has her face beat black-and-blue at a feaſt, at which the gods quarrel, and fight with the ſpirit of a mob." Theſe celeſtial combats, repreſented at various feſtivals in India, doubtleſs allude to the conjunction or oppoſition of the conſtellations; and the aſſertion of Mr. Wilkins, that, on every eclipſe, the Hindoos believe thoſe planets to be ſeized upon by a large ſerpent, or dragon, which aſſertion is ſupported by two paſſages of the Geeta† and Heetopades,‡ in the ſtrongeſt manner corroborates the ſuppoſition. I cannot paſs by this inviting opportunity of demonſtrating the very ſtriking ſimilarity in ſentiment, ſubſiſting upon this as well as upon many other occaſions, between the Hindoos and the Chineſe, proving either an original deſcent from the ſame common anceſtor, or a moſt intimate connection between thoſe nations at ſome remote

* Orme's Hindoſtan, vol. i. p. 3.

† Bhagvat Geeta, p. 149.

‡ Heetopades, p. 28, and note, p. 299.

mote æra. The Jesuit Le Compte, giving a description of a partial eclipse of the sun, which he observed in China about the end of April, 1688, informs us, that, during the whole of the eclipse, the Chinese were under the greatest alarms, imagining they were going to be suddenly enveloped in thick darkness, and made every where the most hideous yelling and horrid noises *to oblige the dragon to depart*. "For, to this animal," he adds, "they attribute all the disappearances of the stars which take place, because the celestial dragon, being hunger-bitten, at that time holds the Sun or Moon fast between his teeth, with intent to devour them."*

The whole of this curious relation exhibits to us, not only decisive evidence of the early proficiency of the Hindoos and Chinese in the science of astronomy, but a glaring proof how deeply, and at what remote periods, their astronomical and theological speculations were blended together and, as it were, interwoven.—To explain the allusion, it is necessary that the reader, not conversant with astronomy, should be informed of the following circumstance, to which I request his attention, as it will be of material use towards

* Le Compte's Memoirs of China, p. 480. English edit.

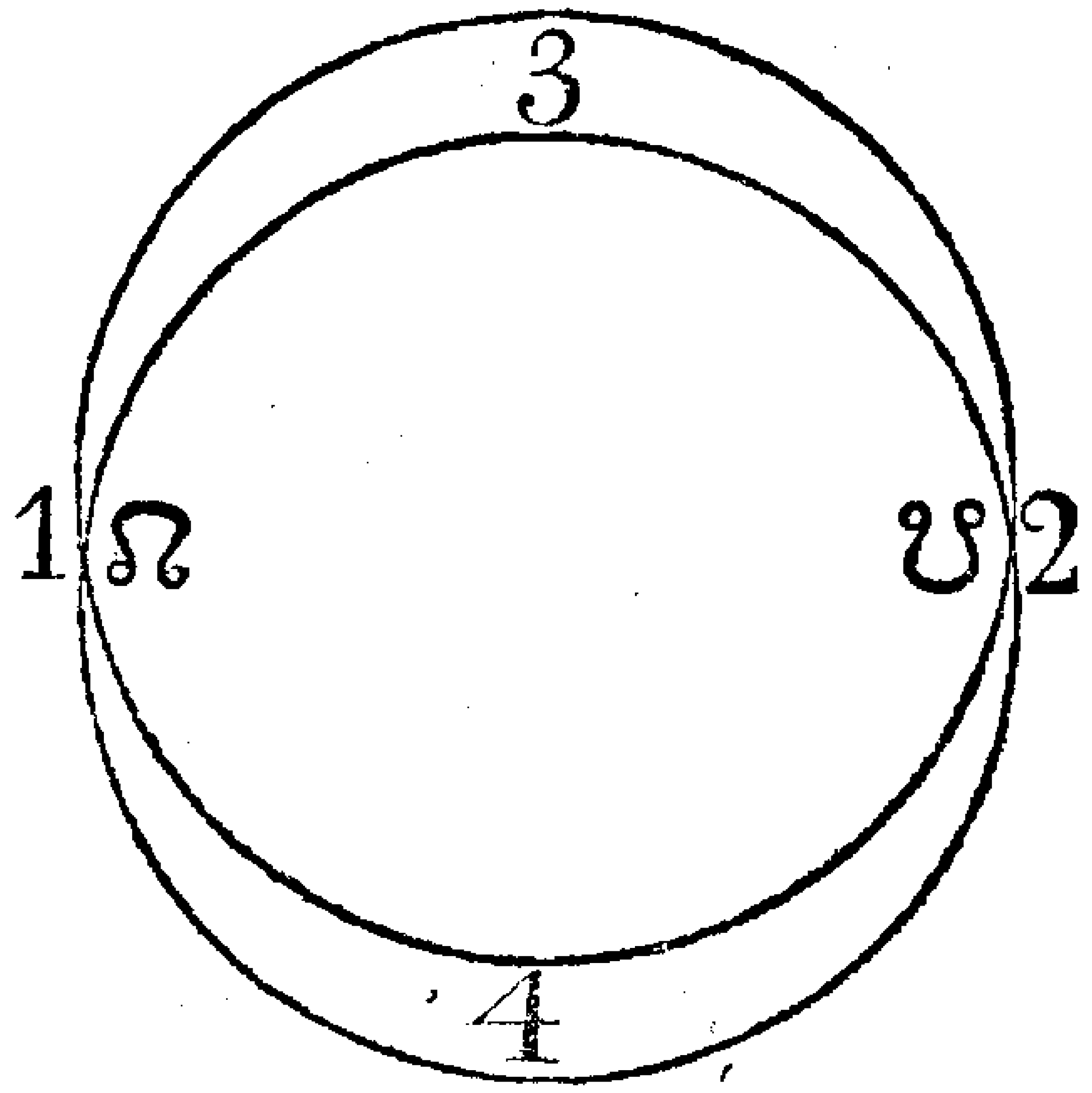
underſtanding many parts of the Indian aſtronomical mythology that will hereafter occur. The two points in the heavens, where the moon's apparent orbit cuts the ecliptic, are called the MOON'S NODES. The point where the moon appears to croſs the ecliptic, during her paſſage into north latitude, is denominated her ASCENDING NODE. On the other hand, the point in the heavens, at which the moon croſſes the ecliptic, during her paſſage into ſouth latitude, is called by aſtronomers her DESCENDING NODE. To the circular curve, thus deſcribed by the moon's orbit, the fancy of the ancient Aſiatic aſtronomers aſſigned the figure of a ſerpent, as indeed they did to the path of the ſun through the ſigns of the zodiac, which, in Eaſtern hieroglyphics, is repreſented by a circle of intertwining ſerpents. Serpens and Draco are terms that in aſtronomy are ſynonymous, and it is therefore, according to Dr. Long, whoſe account of the nodes I have followed above,* that the Arabians give the appellation of *dragon's bellies* to thoſe parts of the orbit of the moon where ſhe makes the greateſt deviation from the line of the ecliptic. This is cuſtomary with them at this day, and proves that they derived their
aſtronomical

* See Dr. Long's Aſtronomy, vol. ii. p. 361.

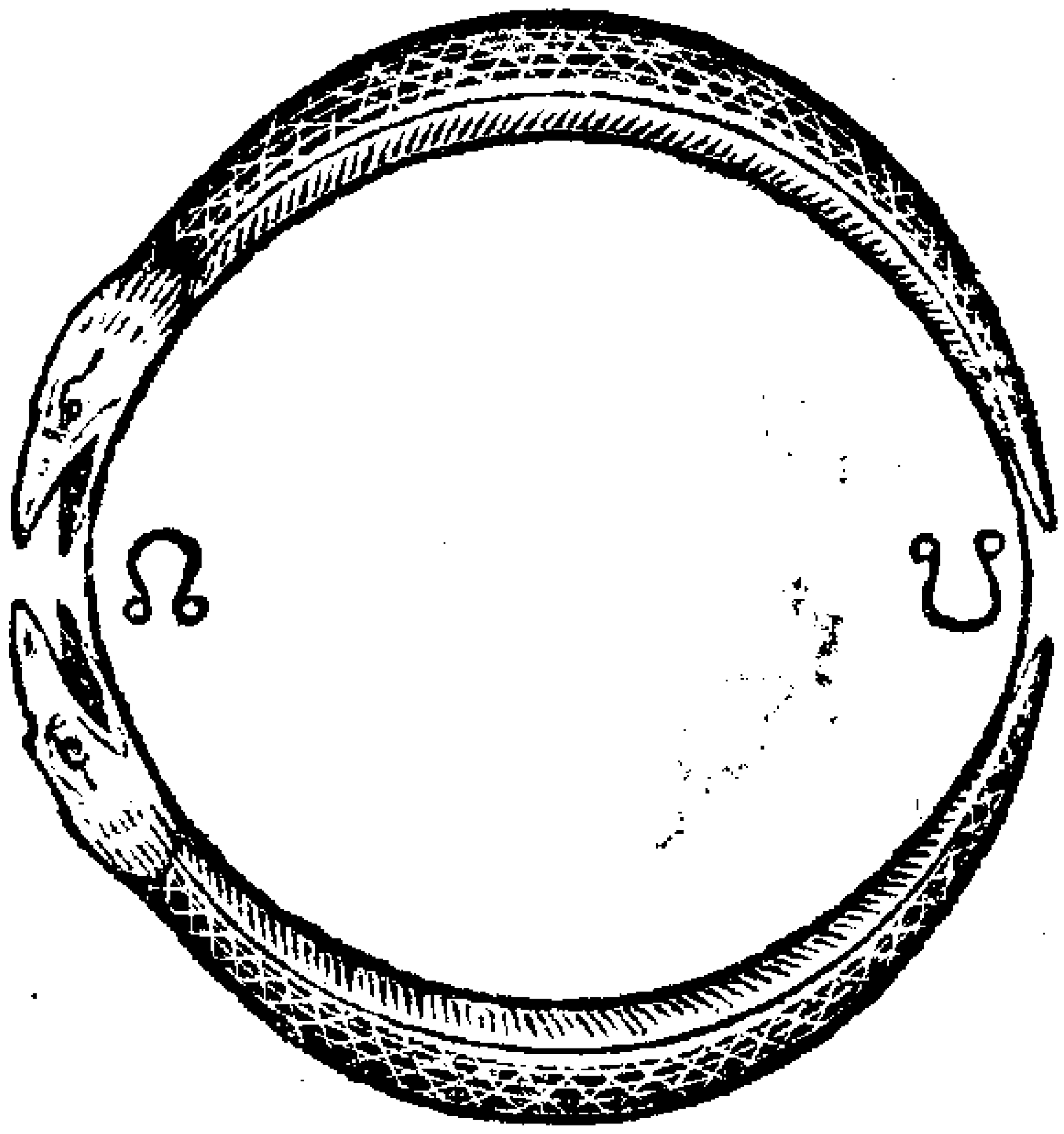
aſtronomical notions from the ſame fountain with the Indians and Chineſe; I mean their anceſtors of the old Chaldæan ſchool. The moon's aſcending node is therefore called the DRAGON'S HEAD, and her deſcending node the DRAGON'S TAIL. But we ſee that the allegorical alluſion of the rapacity of the celeſtial dragon is likewiſe extended to the ſun, as indeed it may be to any planet, by whoſe paſſing orbit the ecliptic is at any time and in a ſimilar manner interſected, and from ideas of this kind undoubtedly have ariſen all thoſe ridiculous tales of the conteſts of thoſe celeſtial combatants. As an illuſtration of what has been juſt obſerved, I have annexed a repreſentation of the real aſtronomical figure made by the moon's orbit in paſſing the ecliptic, and of the hieroglyphic emblem to which it indiſputably gave birth.

It may here be remarked that no *eclipſes* can happen, except when the two planets are in or near the nodes or interſections of the *ecliptic*, whence indeed that great circle derives its name. This portion of the heavens, therefore, has been in all ages the object of more particular obſervation of the ſpeculative race of philoſophers, and it is in this region that infidelity has been too fatally buſy in form-

ing calculations and erecting hypotheses subversive of the Mosaic theology and hostile to the dearest interests of mankind. I shall, hereafter, have occasion to evince that it is chiefly, if not solely, on calculations founded upon the retrograde motion of these nodes from east to west, that is, in an order contrary to that of the signs, and the slow, but now-demonstrated, decrease of the obliquity of that ecliptic, after the rate of a degree in one hundred years, that all the ancient atheistical systems, asserting the immense duration of the world, have been founded. On a minute examination of them, we shall probably discover that they are erected upon a basis scarcely less chimerical than the fable of the celestial dragon, who, upon every lunar eclipse, is supposed by the Hindoos and the Chinese to seize with his teeth that affrighted orb. In the astronomical figure subjoined, number 1 denotes the moon in her ascending node, number 2 represents the planet in her descending node, numbers 3 and 4 mark that wide portion of the serpentine curve, which, in the Arabian astronomy, is called the belly of the dragon. By the dragon, Dr. Long observes, the ancients did not mean that fictitious and monstrous figure with wings, which we see



ſee repreſented in modern paintings, but ſimply a large ſnake, as delineated below, by a compariſon of which with the former mathematical figure we ſo plainly trace the progreſſive union of their aſtronomical ſpeculations with their hieroglyphic theology.



The

The Brahmins of India and the Bonzes of China, to impreſs with awe and veneration the inferior claſſes of mankind, purpoſely veiled under obſcure ænigmas their deep aſtronomical diſcoveries, and inveſted ſcience with the mantle of hieroglyphics. With what unwearied aſſiduity aſtronomy itſelf was anciently purſued in both countries, thoſe maſſy marble inſtruments, erected in the obſervatories of Pekin and Benares, to be ſeen, the former in Du Halde, the latter in the Philoſophical Tranſactions, and with correct engravings of which that portion of this work, which treats of their literature, will be decorated, remain perpetual and irrefragable teſtimonies. I ſhall, hereafter, in my review of Oriental aſtronomy, have occaſion to remark how deeply theſe aſtronomical purſuits influenced all the national habits and opinions of Eaſtern people; how intimately they were blended with all their ſyſtems of theology, and even infected their ſolemn codes of legiſlation, in which we ſhould leaſt of all expect to find the operations of fancy to predominate. Of all the phænomena of aſtronomy, none, however, excited more general diſmay and aſtoniſhment, throughout all the nations of the pagan world, than eclipſes. The moon was thought,

during thoſe ſolemn periods of public alarm, to be ſtruggling in laborious toils, and, to aſſuage her pangs, in that moment of imagined diſtreſs, while the Chineſe rent the air with the ſound of cymbals, trumpets, and the clanging of leſs melodious inſtruments, the whole affrighted nation of the Hindoos crowded to the banks of the Ganges, and other ſacred rivers, and anxiouſly endeavoured, by univerſal ablution in their ſtreams, to prepare themſelves for the deſtiny which they thought rapidly approaching.

As another evident proof how early and how deeply the ancient Indians were engaged in aſtronomical purſuits, the reader will permit me to remind him of what has already been remarked from Mr. Halhed, that the days of the week are named, in the moſt ancient and venerable Sanſcreet books, from the very ſame planets to which they were aſſigned by the Greeks and Romans. Their names, as they ſtand in that gentleman's publication, are AUDEETYE WAR, or Solis dies; SOME WAR, or Lunæ dies; MUNGEL WAR, or Martis dies; BOODHE WAR, or Mercurii dies; BREEHESPET WAR, or Jovis dies; SHOOKRE WAR, or Veneris dies; and SHENISHER WAR, or Saturni dies. I muſt here

observe that these names of the seven planets, over each of which a god presides, are very differently written by M. Sonnerat, as the reader may see in page 170 of the first of his instructive but costly volumes,* as indeed are almost all the names of the Indian divinities, from the mode of writing them in the Asiatic Researches, and by Mr. Wilkins, a circumstance which has often been to me the occasion of some perplexity, since I could only discover them by their functions to be the same deities. M. Sonnerat has in the same page supplied me with a remarkable proof of my recent assertion, that the various conjunctions and oppositions of the planets, their approaches towards the earth, and their retrogradations, are,

* I have, with good reason, mentioned the publication of M. Sonnerat as costly though instructive and ingenious. For the two quarto volumes, of which it consists, I paid Mr. White three guineas and a half; and to give the reader some faint idea of the expense which I have been at on account of this publication, I shall insert below the prices of only a few of these foreign authors upon Oriental subjects; antiquities, geography, and astronomy. Antiquité expliquée, 15 tom. 15l. 15s. D'Ancarville, Recherches, &c. 3 tom. 3l. 18s. Voyages de Niebuhr, 4 tom. 5l. 5s. D'Anville Antiquit. Géograph. 1l. 5s. Kircher's OEdipus Ægyptiacus, 4 tom. 4l. La Lande, Astronomie, 4l. 4s. &c. &c. &c. besides the most expensive of our English authors on Indian and Oriental Antiquities, as the Asiatic Researches, 2 vol. 5l. 5s. Pocock's Egypt, 2 vol. 4l. 4s. &c. &c. &c. &c.

are, among the Hindoos, the perpetual ſource of rejoicing or alarm. "SANI, or Saturn," ſays this author, "is the god who inflicts puniſhment on men during this life; he approaches only to annoy them: Saturday is the day of the week ſacred to him. The Indians entertain dreadful apprehenſions concerning him, and offer to him conciliatory prayers. He is repreſented as of a *blue colour*; he has four arms, he is mounted upon a *raven*; and is ſurrounded by two ſerpents, whoſe intertwining bodies form a *circle* round him." The raven, I muſt remark, is a bird of ill preſage, and how it came originally to be ſo eſteemed all over the Oriental world will be clearly manifeſted when we ſhall arrive at the hiſtory of the true Saturnian patriarch. The ſerpents, forming a *circle* round the orb of Saturn, doubtleſs indicate the vaſt *ring* which ſurrounds that planet; and, if this mythological delineation of Saturn be of any remote date, it is a ſtill farther proof of their early diſcoveries in aſtronomy, ſince the phænomenon of Saturn's ring was, according to Dr. Long, never promulgated to European aſtronomers before the time of the great Huygens, who firſt publiſhed his *Syſtema Saturnium* in 1659.*

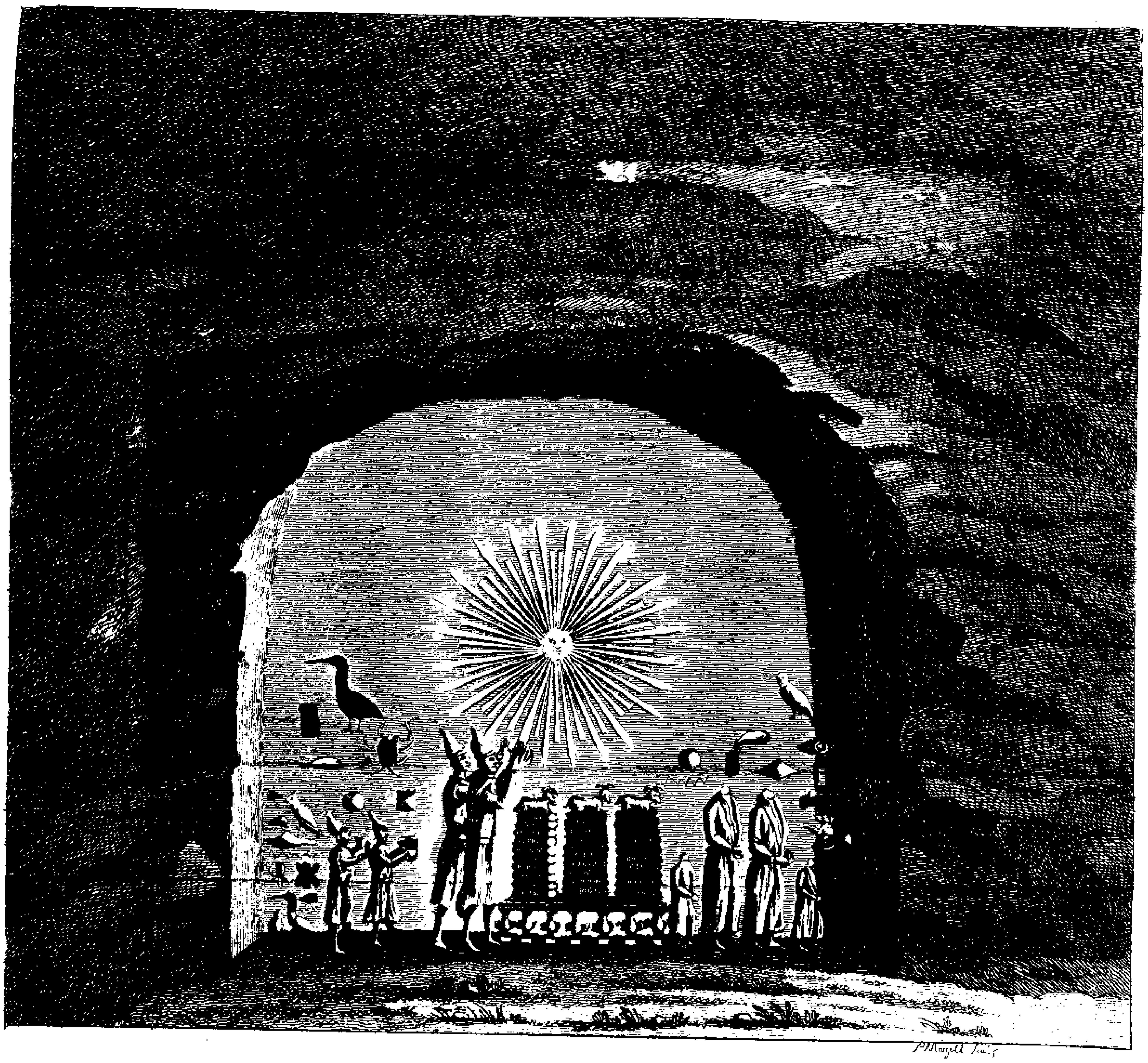
I ſhall

* See Long's Aſtronomy, vol. ii. p. 714.

I ſhall preſently enter upon a more extended and particular inquiry into the theological and metaphyſical doctrines taught in the caverns of India, and endeavour to aſcertain the æra in which, and the race by whom, they were originally fabricated. That they *were* caves in which the myſteries of Mithra, or myſteries very much reſembling thoſe of Mithra, were anciently performed, has, I truſt, been proved both from the analogy in religion between the old inhabitants of Perſia and India, in their general veneration of the SUN and FIRE, as well as from the ſimilitude of the ſtructures and ornaments of theſe caverns with thoſe of the rocky temples, excavated, in honour of Mithra, in the mountains of Perſia and Media. It appears to me that MITHRA and SURYA are the ſame mythologic being, and that the SAURAS and the PERSEES are ſects only different in name. The former appellation is aſſerted by Kircher to be the ſame with Mithraim, or Miſraim;* and, if we could allow that derivation to be juſt, we ſhould not long be perplexed concerning the origin of his worſhip, ſince Miſraim was the firſt-born ſon of the idolatrous Ham. Others, however, have, with more probability, de-

rived

* Œdip. Ægypt. tom. i. p. 218.



P. Mazell Sculp.

An ancient **SACRIFICE** to the **SUN** sculptured in a grotto, or cavern, near the modern Town of **BABAIN**, in Upper Egypt. (The rock has been excavated by the Chisel to the height of fifty feet and is fifty feet in width and six in depth.) The female statues on the left have been mutilated by the barbarian **ARABIANS**.

rived the name from an Oriental primitive, ſignifying *a rock*, an etymology very correſpondent with his origin; for Mithras, in the Perſian mythology, is ſaid to have been born of a ſtone, by which was allegorically denoted the FIRE emitted by the colliſion of two flint-ſtones: *ſemina flammæ abſtruſa in venis ſilicis.* Plutarch, poſſibly from ſome Oriental fable, has improved upon this allegory; for, he acquaints us, that Mithra, born of a ſtone, and deſirous of having offspring, copulated with a ſtone, whence was born a ſon named Diorphos, LIGHT. Mithra, in the ſame vein of allegory, is ſaid, by Porphyry, to have been A STEALER OF OXEN, which he ſecreted in caverns; intimating at once that the ſun, like the ox, was the emblem of fertility, and that his prolific and generative heat produced that fertility by ſecret and inviſible operations.

It is very remarkable that, according to a paſſage in Euſebius, quoted by Mr. Bryant,* Oſiris himſelf was, by the ancients, ſometimes called SURIUS, Οσειριν προσαγορευεσι και Συριον; and ſtill more ſo that, according to Lilius Gyraldus, cited by the ſame writer, the Perſian deity

* See Analyſis, vol. ii. p. 121, where are the references to theſe reſpective authors.

deity ſhould be denominated SURE; *Perſæ Συρη Deum vocant:* for, in this title, we recognize the very name of the ſolar divinity of India. If this ſhould appear far-fetched, by reverting to that country where the worſhip of the SUN and PLANETS was firſt propagated by the impious Belus, we ſhall find in its ancient name of Συρια, Syria, and in its modern appellation of Souria, ſufficient intimation from what region and from what people the Indian name and adoration of the ſun were probably derived. Earlieſt eſtabliſhed in that country, the Sabian error diffuſed itſelf rapidly over all the Eaſt. The Mithratic worſhip in caverns, however, continued longeſt in Perſia. The Perſians thought it impious to erect temples to the deity; they continued, therefore, to perform this worſhip by night in the native and obſcure cavern, and by day under the expanded canopy of heaven.

Cambyſes, that remorſeleſs deſpoiler of the Egyptian temples, is, by Mountfaucon, ſuppoſed to have been the occaſion of renovating the Mithratic worſhip in Egypt about five hundred years before the æra of Chriſtianity; for, though the Egyptians had doubtleſs worſhipped the ſun in caverns long before that period, yet the worſhip in ſubterraneous receſſes

had,

had, for many centuries, been superseded by that in their august temples. That the rites of the Persian Mithra did, at that period, a second time commence, and were blended with those of the Egyptian deities, is evident from a very curious engraving, with which he has favoured the public, of an actual SACRIFICE TO THE SUN, represented in an artificial cavern near the ruins of BABAIN, in Upper Egypt. I thought it so curious a monument of this once almost-universal idolatry, and, at the same time, so immediately illustrative of my own assertions of the ancient prevalence of it in India, that I have had it engraved, and shall present the reader with two descriptions of it, written at two different periods, a century distant from each other. The first, from Mountfaucon, is that of the Jesuit Du Bernat, who designed the whole upon the spot, and is as follows: "We passed the canal of Joseph, an ancient aqueduct, and went to the village of Touna, near the ruins of the city Babain, which is in the midst of those of Abousir. We passed over these ruins and a long plain of sand, which brought us to a very singular monument, which my guide would have me see, and which *deserves* indeed to be seen. It is A SACRIFICE OFFERED TO

THE SUN, and is ſculptured in half-relief on a great rock. The hardneſs of the rock would have been able to defend this monument from the injuries of time, but not thoſe of the ſword, which we find the Arabians have uſed to deface that part of the ſacrifice which is wanting. I made a deſign of it as it then appeared. This ſtupendous cavern is hewn out of a vaſt rock in the middle of a mountain. It muſt have taken up a long time and prodigious labour to excavate this rock, between five and ſix feet deep, and for fifty feet high and fifty wide; for, in this ſo great ſuperficies, all the figures relating to the ſacrifice to the ſun are comprehended. The ſun appears encircled with a body of rays fifteen or twenty feet in diameter. Two prieſts of a natural ſtature, their heads covered with long caps terminating in POINTS, ſtretch their hands towards the ſun, adoring him. The ends of their fingers touch the ends of the ſolar rays. Two little boys, covered like the prieſts, ſtand by their ſides, and reach them two great goblets full of liquor. Below the ſun there are three lambs, killed and extended on piles, conſiſting of ten pieces of wood. Lower, by the piles, are ſeven jars, or *diotas*. On the other ſide of the ſun, oppoſite to the ſacrificers,

facrificers, there are two women and two girls in full relief, joined to the rock by part of their backs only and their feet. We fee very plainly marks of the ftrokes by which their heads were deftroyed. Behind the two boys there is a kind of fquare, charged with feveral hieroglyphics, but fome larger than others are placed up and down in the image."* So far M. Bernat in the Antiquities of Mountfaucon. The other account is that of M. Savary, who vifited this curious monument in 1777, and I am happy in an opportunity of doing juftice, in this refpect, to the accuracy of this traveller, who has been decried as a writer rather fanciful than correct. Through each of the defcriptions a ftrong feature of fimilarity reigns, and it muft give pleafure to the reader to find that, in the fpace of nearly a century, no frefh injury has been done, through the prejudice and fuperftition of the tyrants under whofe dominion Egypt groans, to fo beautiful a fragment of mythologic antiquity.

" A league to the fouth, (fays M. Savary,) are the ruins of an ancient city, which enrich the fmall town of Babain. Some diftance be-

 yond

* See Mountfaucon, L'Antiquité expliquée, the fupplement on the gods of Egypt, tom. ii. book 7, and plate 50.

yond is a curious monument, a rock ſmoothed by the chiſſel, in the body of which a grotto has been cut fifty feet in diameter and ſix deep; the bottom repreſents *a ſacrifice to the ſun*, which is ſculptured in demi-relief; on the right hand, two prieſts, *with pointed caps*, raiſe their arms towards that orb, and touch the end of its rays with their fingers; behind them, two children, with ſimilar caps, hold vaſes for the libation. Three wood piles, ſuſtained by ſeven vaſes with handles, and placed under the ſun, bear ſlain lambs. On the left are two young maidens, who are only attached to the ſtone by the feet and back: the Arabs have broken off the heads and disfigured them with their lances. Various hieroglyphics around give, no doubt, the hiſtory of this ſacrifice, which I believe is meant to Jupiter Ammon, a ſymbolical deity, by which the ancient Egyptians denoted the Sun's entrance into the ſign of the *Ram*. This animal was conſecrated to Jupiter, and they then celebrated the commencement of the aſtronomical year and the renewal of light. The monument thus deſcribed, cut in hard ſtone, cannot but endure to the lateſt poſterity."*

Of

* Savary's Letters on Egypt, vol. i. p. 448.

Of this moſt valuable and elaborate remain of antiquity, ſo directly elucidatory of the Mithratic worſhip of the Perſians, and which, perhaps, has not, for its ſingular curioſity, its rival in the world, Mr. Mazell, my engraver, has taken uncommon pains to furniſh the reader with an exact copy: and Mountfaucon himſelf having farther obliged his readers with various judicious obſervations and conjectures concerning the ſeveral objects pourtrayed upon it, I ſhall ſtate them as a guide to the judgment of the reader, while he ſurveys with wonder a work thus exquiſitely wrought with ſo rude an inſtrument as the chiſſel.

The Perſians, our author remarks, had two ways of repreſenting the SUN in ſculpture and painting: the one, under the form of a young man, whom they denominated MITHRAS; and the other in the ſimilitude of a HUMAN FACE RADIATED. The latter is exhibited in the annexed plate; and, in the ſecond part of this volume, my ſubſcribers will be preſented with a very correct engraving, copied from a rock, of the Perſian Mithras, WINGED, with other aſtronomical ſymbols. By the three piles on which the lambs are extended for ſacrifice, he is of opinion, are ſym-

bolized the THREE SEASONS; for, anciently, they reckoned only three. By the ſeven vaſes are denoted the SEVEN DAYS of the week, or elſe the ſeven planets; and, in corroboration of this laſt conjecture, he refers to an image of Mithras engraved in another part of his Antiquities, near which are ſeven altars flaming to the honour of that deity. The repreſentation of TIME and its various parts, by ſymbolical figures, was a very common and a very natural practice with thoſe ancient mythologiſts who adored the SUN, whoſe revolutions are the fountain and guide of all the diviſions of time, as the ſupreme God! The TIARÆ on the head of the prieſts, he obſerves, very much reſemble thoſe of the Perſians going in proceſſion in the baſs-reliefs found at CHELMINAR, near the ancient Perſepolis, to be ſeen in his ſecond volume. The ſurrounding hieroglyphics, however, are evidently of Egyptian origin; ſince the HAWK, which appears on one ſide, and the IBIS, on the other, were birds holden in the higheſt veneration among the ancient Egyptians. Their being ſculptured, together with the ſymbols of the Perſian ſuperſtition, in this image, are irrefragable proofs of his antecedent aſſertion, that, at the period of its excavation, the Egyptian

tian and Persian devotion had begun to assimilate.*

Caves, and other similar subterranean recesses, consecrated to the worship of the Sun, were very generally, if not universally, in request among nations where that superstition was practised; and some of these caverns were full as curious in their construction, though possibly not so magnificent, as those of Media, Persia, and India. Various engravings of Mithratic caves in Media and Persia are to be met with in the travels of Le Bruyn and Sir John Chardin in the former of those countries. The mountains of Chusistan, in particular, at this day abound with stupendous excavations of this sort. From the higher Asia the veneration for sacred caverns gradually diffused itself over Asia Minor. The lofty steeps of Parnassus, sacred to the Muses, were covered with caverns. The Sybil made her dark responses amidst the gloom of a cavern; and it was from the hallowed rock of Delphi that the priestess of Apollo, (the solar deity of Greece,) inspired with a holy fury, uttered those oracles, that were so widely celebrated in the ancient world. In the course

 of

* Consult the whole of Mountfaucon's ingenious remarks in the page of his supplement cited before.

of its progreſs from the Eaſt, this ſpecies of devotion ſo far infected even the Roman people, in the early periods of their empire, that they celebrated feaſts in honour of Mithra, and dedicated an altar to that deity with this inſcription, *Deo invicto ſoli Mithræ.* The reigning idolatry was vigorouſly attacked by thoſe celebrated fathers of the church, the eloquent Tertullian and the more violent Jerome; the former of whom ridicules the votaries of that ſuperſtition under the term of *knights, or ſoldiers, of Mithra*;* while the latter brands the place of their worſhip with the title of the *Den of Mithra.*† The ancient prevalence, indeed, of the ſolar worſhip in Rome is evident from the ſacred reverence that prevailed for the *veſtal fire*, which was kindled by the rays of the ſun, and which the virgin prieſteſſes, who attended it, kept continually burning in conſecrated vaſes. In ſuch profound veneration was this *hallowed flame* holden, that the accidental extinction of it was ſuppoſed to be the fatal preſage of the moſt dreadful calamities to the empire. Virgil repreſents Æneas, the

* Mithra ſignat in frontibus milites ſuos, lib. i. cap. 1, de Baptiſmo.

† Mithræ Spelæum, epiſt. ad Lætam, cap. li.

the vaunted progenitor of the Romans, as zealoufly preferving this facred fire amidft the furrounding conflagration of Troy:

> ———————————— Veftamque potentem,
> Æternumque *adytis* effert *penetralibus* ignem.
>
> Virg. Æneid. ii. 297.

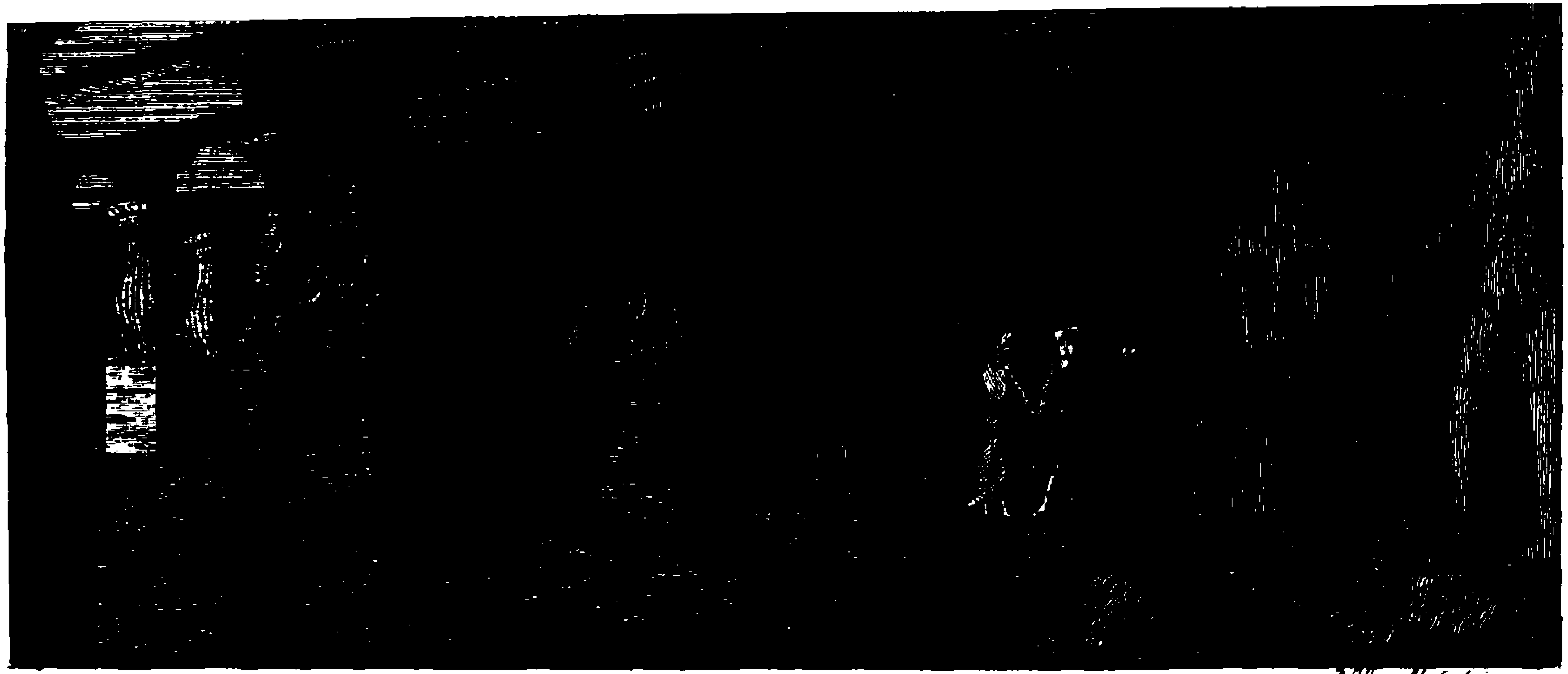
The worfhip of Mithra, which ftill continued to be practifed by fome devotees, was finally profcribed at Rome, by order of Gracchus, præfect of the prætorium, in the fourth century.

Allufive to this kind of cavern-temple and this fpecies of devotion, there is a remarkable paffage in Ezekiel,* where the infpired prophet in a vifion beholds, and in the moft fublime language ftigmatizes, the horrible idolatrous abominations, which the Ifraelites had borrowed from their Afiatic neighbours of Chaldæa, Egypt, and Perfia. *And he brought me*, fays the prophet, *to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold* A HOLE IN THE WALL. *Then faid he unto me, fon of man, dig now in the wall; and, when I had digged in the wall, behold a* DOOR. *And he faid unto me, go in,* (that is, into this CAVERN-TEMPLE,) *and behold the wicked abominations that they do there. So I went in,*

* Ezek. viii. 6. et feq.

in, and saw; and behold, every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and ALL THE IDOLS *of the house of Israel, were* POURTRAYED UPON THE WALL ROUND ABOUT. In this subterraneous temple were *seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel*, and their employment was of a nature very nearly similar to that of the priests in Salsette; THEY STOOD WITH EVERY MAN HIS CENSER IN HIS HAND, AND A THICK CLOUD OF INCENSE WENT UP. *Then said he unto me, son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do* IN THE DARK, *every man in the* CHAMBERS OF HIS IMAGERY? In Egypt, to the particular idolatry of which country, it is plain, from his mentioning *every form of creeping things and abominable beasts*, the prophet in this place alludes, these dark secluded recesses were called MYSTIC CELLS, and in them were celebrated the secret mysteries of Isis and Osiris, represented by the quadrupeds sacred to those deities, who, after all, as has been repeatedly asserted in this Dissertation, are only personifications of the SUN and MOON. Those, who are still inclined to contend for the superior antiquity of Egypt above all nations of the earth, will, from this circumstance, probably join with Warburton in insisting that the MITHRATIC

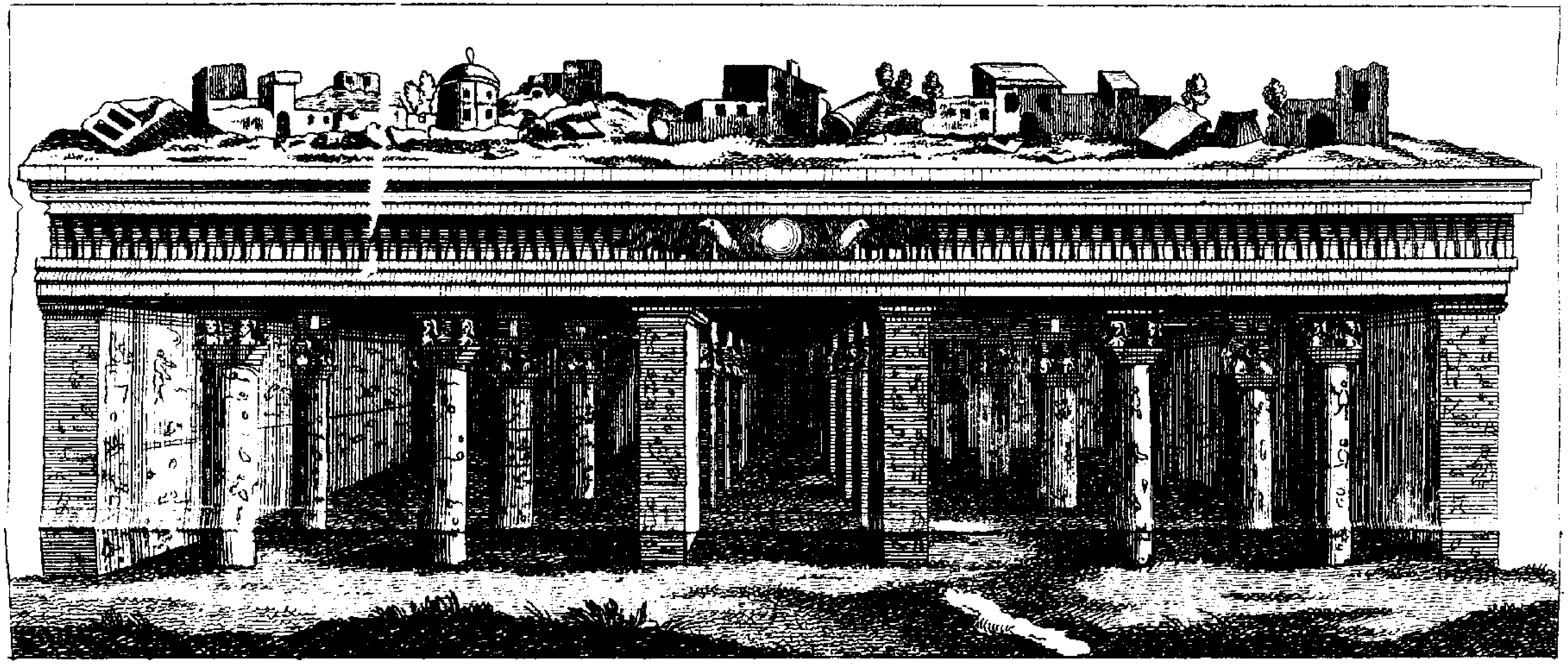
RITES



J. Mazell sculp.

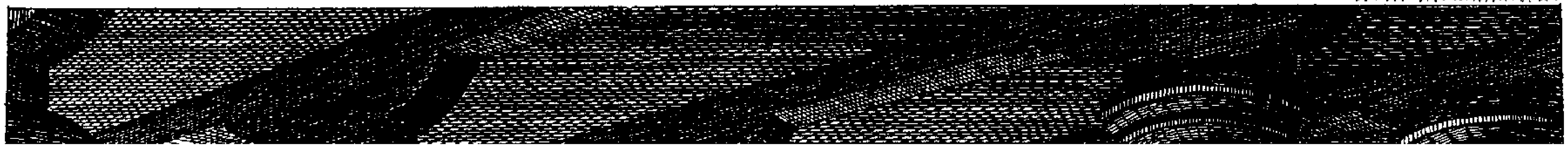
A perspective view of the inside of the grand cavern-pagoda of ELEPHANTA, and of the more conspicuous mythologic SCULPTURES which decorate the walls of that pagoda.

The Vestibule of a most superb temple at DINDARA, the ancient TENTARA, in Upper Egypt.



The massy columns forty feet high half buried in the sands and charged with hieroglyphic sculptures. On the extensive summit of the temple the ARABIANS have erected a considerable Town.

from Mountfaucon.



RITES themſelves were eſtabliſhed in imitation of thoſe of Iſis and Oſiris. But ſince by Oſiris was ſymbolized the SOLAR SPHERE, and, by his affectionate conſort Iſis, the LUNAR ORB, illumined by his ray, or, as ſome mythologiſts explain it, the TERRESTRIAL GLOBE, made fruitful by his generative warmth, we muſt look for the origin of this ſplendid devotion to that primæval country where the hoſt of heaven and the elements of nature were firſt venerated; and whence the Sabian ſuperſtition darted throughout the world that beam of tranſcendent, but deluſive, brightneſs which dazzled the eyes of the infatuated human race, and induced them to miſtake and adore the grand receptacle of light for the Source of Light himſelf! Before this work ſhall be concluded, the ample retroſpect, which my ſubject will compel me to take of the Chaldaïc theology and ſciences, will have a direct tendency to eſtabliſh the truth of the hypotheſis, which makes Chaldæa the original ſource of the Sabian error, and the central region in which it moſt vigorouſly flouriſhed. For, upon what other hypotheſis ſhall we account for the univerſal and immemorial prevalence of this ſuperſtition in every region of the earth? how ſhall we explain ſo ſingular a phænome-

non

non as that the pyramidal temple, ſymbolical of the ſolar ray, ſhould riſe with almoſt as bold an elevation in Mexico as in Egypt? and that the Peruvians ſhould adore the ſun with as much ardour as anciently did the Magi of Perſia and the Brahmins of India?

SECTION

SECTION V.

The Doctrines of the Brahmins and early Greeks compared in a more particular Investigation of the mysterious Theological Rites, anciently celebrated in the Caverns of Salsette and Elephanta; proving, from the Similarity of their Construction, in Respect to the greater and less Divisions, and the long winding gloomy Recesses, equally belonging to those Caverns, the mystic Cell of Egypt, and the Temple of Eleusis in Greece, that the MYSTERIES *so celebrated over all the ancient World, but particularly in Greece, were first performed in India, because the older Empire.—The Metempsychosis, the leading Doctrine in all the ancient Mysteries, branched out into two distinct Kinds: the moral Metempsychosis and the sidereal Metempsychosis.—Both Kinds extensively examined.*

THE GENIUS OF ANTIQUITY delighted in MYSTERY. Dark and secret as were the subterraneous vaults and woody recesses, in

in which the ſages of the Eaſt took up their reſidence, were the doctrines there promulgated. Their theology was veiled in allegory and hieroglyphics; their philoſophy was involved in a circle of ſymbols. All the ſublime wiſdom of Aſia, however, was concentrated and diſplayed in the CAVE OF MITHRA, which, we have obſerved from Porphyry, repreſented THE WORLD, and contained expreſſive emblems of the various elements of nature.

I have offered very forcible arguments to prove, that the excavations of Salſette and Elephanta were no other than ſtupendous temples, in which the rites of that deity, though probably under a different appellation, were performed. As corroborative evidence of my aſſertions in that reſpect, I have given, in a preceding ſection, the deſcription of two auguſt temples to the ſun; the one of aſtoniſhing ſplendour, in Guzzurat, which was viſited by Apollonius Tyanæus, in his voyage to India, at ſo remote a period as eighteen hundred years ago: and the other affirmed, in the Ayeen Akbery, to have been erected by an ancient rajah, and not leſs remarkable for its magnitude and beautiful ſculptures than the former for its ſplendour. But ſince the caverns of India are

undoubtedly

undoubtedly of a date far anterior to the age of the ſecond Zoroaſter, or Zaratuſht, who flouriſhed in the reign of Darius Hyſtaſpes, and who, according to Porphyry, "*Firſt of all*, in the mountains adjacent to Perſia, conſecrated a natural cave in honour of Mithra, the father of the univerſe:"* and, ſince Zoroaſter conſecrated that cavern, *after his viſit* to the Brahmins of India, and when he had already been inſtructed in the profound arcana of that aſtronomical ſcience, for which they were ſo diſtinguiſhed in antiquity; there ariſes, from this collective evidence, proof little leſs than demonſtrative, that certain myſterious rites and ceremonies, congenial with their aſtronomical and theological ſpeculations, were inſtituted and celebrated in theſe caverns at a period prior to thoſe celebrated in any of the neighbouring regions. Although the circumſtances above ſtated are highly in favour of ſuch an hypotheſis, yet it might appear preſumptuous in me to aſſert, that theſe myſterious celebrations were the real origin of ALL THOSE MYSTIC RITES which, in ſucceeding ages, throughout Aſia as well as Europe, in Perſia, in Greece, and in Rome, paſſed under the various denominations of Mithriac, Orphic, Eleuſinian,

* Porphyrius De Antro Nympharum, p. 254.

PEOPLE'S LIBRARY, NO. ___ TIME ___ DAYS

Eleuſinian, and Bacchic; and the more ſo, becauſe a very profound critic in ancient Egyptian literature* has aſſerted, as an incontrovertible fact, that the moſt early myſteries inſtituted in the world were thoſe of Egypt in honour of Iſis and Oſiris. When, however, we conſider the high and acknowledged antiquity of the GEETA, and other Sanſcreet productions, in which thoſe myſteries are evidently glanced at; when we attend to the form in which the caverns themſelves are excavated, and compare them with what we read, in ancient authors, of the form of the Egyptian and Grecian temples, ſupernal or ſubterranean; above all, when we conſider the hieroglyphic ſculptures and aſtronomical ſymbols, with which both the Egyptian and Indian temples were adorned; we poſſibly ſhall not be over-haſty in acceding to the poſitive aſſertion of that learned but dogmatical writer. Indeed, an hypotheſis directly ſubverſive of Warburton's may with every appearance of reaſon be maintained; and, before this volume ſhall be concluded, very convincing teſtimony may reſult from this inveſtigation, that the myſteries of both Oſiris and Mithra are only copies of the ancient worſhip of Surya, the

SOLAR

* See Warburton's Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 133.

SOLAR FIRE, which originally was adored in Chaldæa, or Syria, as the nobleſt object in nature, and as the pureſt ſymbol of Deity in the whole extent of creation.

The ſubject itſelf alludes to periods too remote, not to be involved in the deepeſt obſcurity. It is principally by analogy that our reſearches muſt be guided and our deciſion regulated. I proceed, therefore, to ſhew, that, in theſe caverns, apartments were conſtructed exactly ſimilar, and ſymbols were elevated uniformly correſpondent, with thoſe which were anciently provided, in the myſtic cells of Egypt, for the celebration of the rites of Iſis, and in the gloomy ſubterraneous receſſes ſacred in Greece to Ceres, the great mother of all things, or the vivific principle in nature perſonified. Plutarch,* who travelled into Egypt for the purpoſe of obtaining information upon the ſubject, and who has largely inveſtigated, and in great part explained, the doctrines inculcated by the prieſts of that country, concerning Iſis and Oſiris, in regard to the *form* of their temples, in which theſe myſteries were performed, expreſsly deſcribes them, as, in one place, ανειμενων εις πτερα και δρομους υπαιθριους και καθαρους, extending

 into

* Plutarch. de Iſide et Oſiride, p. 639. Steph. edit.

into long wings and fair and open avenues; and, in another, κρυπτα και σκοτια κατα γης εχοντων ϛολιστηρια Θηβαιοις εοικοτα και σηκοις, as having ſecret and gloomy ſubterraneous veſtries, reſembling the adyta of the Thebans. Exactly thus arranged were the Indian caverns. Mr. Hunter informs us, "that, on entering Elephanta, you are led, firſt of all, into a verandah, or colonnade, which extends from eaſt to weſt ſixty feet; that its breadth from north to ſouth is ſixteen feet; and that the body of the cave is on every ſide ſurrounded by ſimilar verandahs.;"* and, in reſpect to its dark receſſes, Niebuhr obſerves: "Près de D, (ſur le plan,† tab. 3,) il y a des appartemens obſcurs: où, dans la ſaiſon que j'ai été voir ce temple, il y avoit encore de l'eau, qui vient fort à point aux vaches qui ſe rendent ici. Près d'E, il y a un grand appartement pareillement obſcur." With reſpect to the ſymbols that adorned the myſtic cell of Egypt, they are all ſuppoſed to be accurately arranged in that celebrated monument of antiquity, called the ISIAC OR BEMBINE TABLE, which exhibits at one view, under various beſtial

* Archæologia, vol. vii. p 287.

† Voy. en Arab. tom. ii. p. 28, where ſee that plan.

beſtial and human figures, the deities adored in Egypt, but which, as has been conjectured by thoſe learned antiquarians, who have written concerning its age and deſign in a more particular manner, alludes to the myſtic rites of Iſis and Oſiris. Of this curious and valuable remain, a ſhort account from Pignorius, whoſe edition of it is in my poſſeſſion, may not be unacceptable to my readers. It was a table of braſs, four feet in length, and nearly of the ſame diameter; the groundwork of the plate conſiſted of a black enamel, with ſilver plates curiouſly inlaid, on which were engraved a variety of emblems, divided into different claſſes and compartments, with hieroglyphic characters intermixed; the centre contained the human figures, or rather gods in human ſhape, ſome ſtanding, ſome in motion, ſome ſitting on thrones, to whom other human figures are making offerings or performing ſacrifices. Two of theſe figures, diſtinguiſhed by the ſacred ibis and the hawk's head, are evidently intended for Isis and Osiris; but even, without that diſtinction, the conſpicuous figure, which the ſacred *bull*, the known ſymbol of Oſiris, makes on this table, ſufficiently points out the deities, in illuſtration of *whoſe rites* it was deſigned. The

 border,

border, that ſurrounds the whole, is crowded with figures of birds, beaſts, and fiſhes, agreeing very nearly, both in number and ſhape, with the various animals aſſerted by the ancients to have received divine homage in the different cities of Egypt. Before moſt of theſe are human figures, delineated in poſtures of profound adoration. This valuable relic of ancient art, on the plunder of Rome by the army of Charles the Fifth, about the year 1527, became the property of a common artificer,* and was ſold by him to Cardinal Bembo, by whoſe name it has ſince been frequently diſtinguiſhed. At the death of that cardinal, the TABLE OF ISIS came into the poſſeſſion of the Duke of Mantua, in whoſe family it was preſerved as an ineſtimable rarity, till the palace of Mantua was plundered of its immenſe treaſure of curioſities by the imperial general in 1630, ſince which period the original has not been heard of; though, owing to the zeal of thoſe profound antiquaries, Pignorius and Mountfaucon, the literary world is in poſſeſſion of two exact copies of it, with ſome curious ſtrictures by each of thoſe writers. The figures of the gods,

* Vide Pignorii MENSÆ ISICÆ Expoſitio, p. 12. Edit. Amſt. 1669.

gods, or deified mortals, in the middle of this table, might poſſibly be intended for a repreſentation of thoſe ſculptures that adorned the body of the myſtic temple, in the ſame manner as the Indian deities, or god-rajahs, are arranged along the centre part of the walls of Elephanta; while the animals peculiar to Egypt, pourtrayed on the ſurrounding border, might, like thoſe peculiar to India on the cornices of the ſame temple-pagoda, be ſymbols of the various conſtellations; and the kneeling figures, emblematical of the worſhip paid to them.

After conſidering the form and ſome of the decorations, let us attend to the myſterious rites celebrated, and the doctrines themſelves propagated, in theſe ſacred receſſes. I offer it, with diffidence, as my humble opinion, that the grand baſis of all the theological dogmas inculcated, at leaſt in thoſe of India, was the Μετεμψυχωσις, or tranſmigration of the human ſoul, and I am ſo fortunate as to be able to ſupport that opinion by the expreſs declaration of Porphyry, that the Metempſychoſis was one of the firſt doctrines taught εν τοις τȣ Μιθρȣ μυςηριοις, in the myſtic rites of Mithra, which is only the Aſiatic appellation of the African Oſiris. Now the Me-

 tempſychoſis

tempſychoſis was a doctrine, invented, by the philoſophers of the ancient world, for the direct purpoſe of vindicating the myſterious ways of Providence, and removing all impious doubts concerning the moral attributes of the Deity; which, if permitted to take root, they knew muſt have been attended with the moſt baneful effects in ſociety. But the doctrine of the exiſtence of the human ſoul in a *prior* ſtate naturally induced the ſuppoſition of its exiſtence in a *future* ſphere of action; and, while thoſe diligent obſervers of mankind beheld the unequal diſtribution of human happineſs and miſery, while they beheld VIRTUE frequently groaning under the bondage of oppreſſion, and VILLANY as frequently clothed in regal purple, they were not only confirmed themſelves in that judgment, but endeavoured to impreſs the awful truth upon the minds of others. If this argument ſhould not hold good in regard to *all* the philoſophers of Greece and Rome, as in the caſe of certain bold ſceptics and preſumptuous ſophiſts among them, the little knowledge I have acquired of the theologic ſentiments, of the inflexible virtue, and ſevere penances, of the Hindoo philoſophers, has convinced me, that to *them* it is perfectly applicable. The profeſſed

feſſed deſign, then, both of the Indian, the Egyptian, and Eleuſinian, myſteries, was to reſtore the fallen ſoul to its priſtine ſtate of purity and perfection; and the INITIATED in thoſe myſteries were inſtructed in the ſublime doctrines of a ſupreme preſiding Providence, of the immortality of the ſoul, and of the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate. But the Brahmins, in their profounder ſpeculations on the being and attributes of God, initiated their pupils into myſteries ſtill more refined: they inculcated upon their minds the neceſſity, reſulting as a natural conſequence from that doctrine, of not only reſtraining the violence of the more boiſterous paſſions, but of entirely ſubduing the groſs animal propenſities by continued acts of abſtinence and mortification, and of ſeeking that intimate communion of ſoul with the great Father of the univerſe, which, when at its moſt elevated point of holy tranſport, is in India denominated *the abſorbed ſtate*. In India, I ſay, for this ενθȣσιασμος of the ſoul, thoſe mortifications of the body, and that ſubjugation of the paſſions, ever have been, and are at this day, carried to ſuch a height of extravagance as is abſolutely inconceivable by thoſe who have not been ſpectators of it, and is ſuch as

far exceeds the moſt boaſted auſterities of Romiſh penitents. I ſhall, in a ſucceeding chapter, lay before the reader ſome circumſtances of voluntary penance undergone by the YOGEES, or devotees of India, that cannot fail to excite equal horror and aſtoniſhment in his mind. For the preſent I ſhall content myſelf with giving a few paſſages, that relate to the Indian doctrine of the Metempſychoſis and the Unity of God, from the three Sanſcreet publications, ſo often alluded to in the courſe of this Diſſertation; ſince thoſe publications are doubtleſs the moſt authentic ſource of all poſſible information upon Indian antiquities; and ſince one of them, the GEETA, was unqueſtionably written in the very earlieſt ages of the world, and, at all events, many centuries before the ages of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato.

In that ſublime Epiſode, which, Mr. Wilkins informs us, the Brahmins conſider as the repoſitory "of all the grand myſteries of their religion,"* the doctrine of the Metempſychoſis was probably firſt promulgated to mankind in the following paſſages. "As *the ſoul*, in this mortal frame, findeth *infancy*, *youth*,

* Preface to the Geeta, p. 23.

youth, and *old age*; so, in some future frame, will it find the like." Bhagvat-Geeta, page 36. "As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the soul, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new." "Death is certain to all things which are subject to birth, and regeneration to all things which are mortal." "The former state of beings is unknown, the middle state is evident, but their future state is not to be discovered." Ibid. page 37.—In these passages, the doctrine of the transmigration itself is clearly established: let us consider it in the ascending scale, as holding out a reward for virtuous actions. "A man, whose devotions have been broken off by death, having enjoyed, for an immensity of years, the rewards of his virtues in the regions above, at length is born again in some respectable family; or, perhaps, in the house of some learned YOGEE." Ibid. p. 67. This species of devotees, whose prescribed routine of penance and prayer has not been fully completed, seems alluded to in another part of the Geeta, under the character of those, "who obtain the regions of Eendra, the prince of celestial beings, in which (inferior) heaven (as in Mahomed's paradise) they

they feaſt upon celeſtial food and divine enjoyments; and, when they have partaken of that ſpacious heaven for a while, in proportion to their virtues, they ſink again into this mortal life." P. 80. "Wiſe men, who have abandoned all thought of the fruit which is produced from their actions, (that is, who are actuated by a total indifference in regard to terreſtrial concerns, and are abſorbed in contemplation of the Deity,) are freed from the chains of birth, and go to the regions of eternal happineſs." P. 40. "The YOGEE, or devotee, who, labouring with all his might, is purified of his offences, and, AFTER MANY BIRTHS, MADE PERFECT, at length goes to the *ſupreme abode.*" Ibid. p. 67. "Know, O Arjun, that all the regions, between this and the *abode of Brahm*, afford but a tranſient reſidence; but he, who findeth me, returneth not again to mortal birth." P. 75. Let us now conſider the doctrine of the Metempſychoſis in the deſcending ſcale, or as a puniſhment of vicious actions. "There are two kinds of deſtiny prevailing in the world; the divine deſtiny is for MOKSH, or eternal abſorption in the divine nature, and the evil deſtiny confineth the ſoul to mortal birth. Thoſe, who are born under the influence of the

the evil deſtiny, know not what it is to proceed in virtue or recede in vice; they ſay the world is without beginning, without end, and without an Eeſwar (ſupreme God), that all things are conceived by the junction of the ſexes, and that LOVE is the only cauſe." The principles of the SEEVA BUKHT ſeem here to be cenſured by Kreeſhna, who, we have often before obſerved, is the incarnate repreſentative of the very deity, VEESHNU, by whoſe name the other great ſect of Hindoſtan is diſtinguiſhed. "Theſe LOST SOULS, and men of little underſtandings, having fixed upon this viſion, are born of dreadful and inhuman deeds, for the deſtruction of mankind; they truſt to their carnal appetites, [moſt probably the true ſource of the devotion paid to the *Lingam*,] which are hard to be ſatisfied, are hypocrites, and overwhelmed with madneſs and intoxication. Becauſe of their folly, they adopt falſe doctrines, and continue to live the LIFE OF IMPURITY; therefore I caſt down upon the earth thoſe furious abject wretches, thoſe evil beings, who thus deſpiſe me, into the wombs of EVIL SPIRITS and UNCLEAN BEASTS. Being doomed to the wombs of ASOORS, (fallen rebellious ſpirits,) *from birth to birth*, at length, not finding me,

they

they go into the moſt infernal regions." Geeta, p. 115, 116, 117. In the infernal regions, however, they are not doomed to languiſh in miſery for ever, ſince the Hindoo ſyſtem of theology allows not of the doctrine of *eternal torments*; but, after a certain period, the delinquents are called forth again to begin anew the probationary journey of ſouls, and are all to be finally happy.

There is a very curious, though ſomewhat obſcure, paſſage, in the eighth diviſion of this moſt ancient collection of divine precepts, that ſtrongly corroborates the opinion, which I ventured to offer in a preceding page, that the ſeven BOOBUNS, or ſpheres of purification, through which, according to Mr. Halhed, the tranſmigrating ſoul is doomed to paſs, had a direct alluſion to the ſeven planets: it is as follows. "Thoſe holy men, who are acquainted with Brahm, departing this life in the fiery light of day, in the *bright ſeaſon of the moon*, within the ſix months of the ſun's northern courſe, go unto him; but thoſe who depart in the gloomy night of *the moon's dark ſeaſon*, and whilſt the ſun is yet within the ſouthern part of his journey, aſcend for a while into the regions of the moon, and again return into *mortal birth*." Ibid. p. 76.

To

To this prevailing doctrine of the Metempsychosis, a doctrine indisputably propagated in the schools of India long before it was promulged in those of the Egyptian and Grecian philosophers, a variety of expressions occurring in a drama, exhibited according to an author by no means favourable to the high chronological claims of the Brahmins, at the court of an Indian monarch, above 2000 years ago,* and representative of men and manners, who flourished a thousand years before even that period, decidedly point. " In thy *passage over this earth,* where the paths are now high, now low, and the true path seldom distinguished, the traces of thy feet must needs be unequal; but virtue will press thee right onward." Sacontala, p. 49. " Perhaps," says the king Dushmanta, " the sadness of men, otherwise happy, on seeing beautiful forms and listening to sweet melody, arises from some faint remembrance of past joys and the traces of connections *in a former state of existence.*" Ibid. p. 55. In the following passage, we not only find this doctrine glanced at, but the strange sentiments entertained by the Hindoos, relative to the earth and its seven deeps, as described in the geographical treatise, authentically

* See the Preface to Sacontala, p. 9.

authentically difplayed. Of the infant fon of Dufhmanta, the divine Cafyapa thus prophetically fpeaks: "Know, Dufhmanta, that his heroic virtue will raife him to a dominion extended from fea to fea: before he has paffed *the ocean of mortal life*, he fhall rule, unequalled in combat, *this earth with feven peninfulas.*" P. 97. As, in the extract from the Geeta, the reader has been made acquainted that the god Eendra has an inferior heaven, or paradife, which is appointed for the refidence of thofe fouls whofe penance has not been fully completed; fo, in the Sacontala, we read of "the fuperior heaven, and central palace of Veefhnu," p. 42, which proves their belief in a fucceffion of celeftial manfions. The following paffage, defcribing the occupations of the Brahmin candidate for perfection, is fo highly illuftrative of what has been before remarked concerning the facred baths of purification and confecrated groves and caverns, that I cannot avoid tranfcribing it: "It becomes pure fpirits to feed on balmy air, in a *foreft* blooming with trees of life; to bathe in rills dyed yellow with the golden duft of the lotos, and to fortify their virtue in the myfterious *bath*; to meditate in *caves*, the pebbles of which are unblemifhed gems; and to reftrain

their paſſions, even though nymphs of exquiſite beauty ſmiled around them: in this foreſt alone is attained the ſummit of true piety, to which other hermits in vain aſpire." Geeta, p. 88.

It is remarkable, that this holy grove, the retreat of Brahmin hermits, is deſcribed as being ſituate in the mountains of HEEMAKOT, which is the Sanſcreet name of IMAUS, that is, in that very range of mountains of which Naugracut forms a part, and in which I have already aſſerted the Brahmin religion once flouriſhed in its greateſt vigour. "That mountain," ſays Matali, the charioteer of Eendra, "is the mountain of Gandharvas, named Heemakot: the univerſe contains not a more excellent place for the ſucceſsful devotion of the pious." P. 87. In the ſame page, there follows a deſcription of a devotee in the act of penance, which is in the higheſt degree intereſting and affecting; and will hereafter be cited by me, as a proof to what an extreme point of ſeverity they carried thoſe penitentiary tortures, which they voluntarily inflict on themſelves, to obtain abſorption in BRAHME, or, in other words, eternal happineſs.

The laſt paſſage which I ſhall extract from the Sacontala, relative to the journey of the

migrating

migrating ſoul, forms the concluding ſentence of that beautiful drama, and is more deciſive than any yet adduced: "May Seeva, with an azure neck and red locks, eternally potent and ſelf-exiſting, avert from me the pain of another birth in this periſhing world, *the ſeat of crimes and of puniſhment.*" Ibid. p. 98.

That ancient and celebrated compoſition of VEESHNU SARMA, the Heetopades, is not leſs expreſs upon the ſubject of the Metempſychoſis. "It is ſaid, fate is nothing but the deeds committed in *a former ſtate of exiſtence*; wherefore it behoveth a man vigilantly to exert the powers he is poſſeſſed of." Heetopades, p. 6. This paſſage ſeems to furniſh us with an explanation of the word deſtiny, in a preceding extract from the Geeta; for, if that word be underſtood in a literal ſenſe, all human exertions muſt be of little avail. Mr. Wilkins explains the paſſage in this manner in a ſhort note, in which he ſays: "It is neceſſary to inform the reader, that many of the Hindoos believe this to be a place of rewards and puniſhments as well as of probation. Thus, good and bad fortune are the fruits of good and evil deeds committed in a former life; therefore, to prevent the latter in a future life, the author aſſerts, It behoveth a man," &c. Ibid. p. 296. "What

elſe,

elſe, my friend, can this misfortune be, but the effect of the evil committed in a *prior ſtate of exiſtence?* Sickneſs, ſorrow, and diſtreſs, bonds and puniſhment, to corporeal beings, *are fruits of the tree of their own tranſgreſſions.*" P. 25. "In this world, *raiſed up for our purification, and to prevent our wandering in the regions below,* the reſolution to ſacrifice one's own life to the ſafety of another is attained by the practice of virtue." Ibid. p. 229. "The diſſolution of a body foretelleth *a new birth*; thus, the coming of death, which is not to be paſſed over, *is as the entrance into life.*" Ibid. p. 270.

Finally, let it be obſerved, that Mr. Wilkins explains the term Salvation, as "an union with the univerſal Spirit of God, and *final exemption from mortal birth.*" Heetopades, p. 299.

After having produced theſe paſſages relative to the tranſmigration of the ſoul through the various animal manſions, let us conſider the Metempſychoſis in a ſtill more exalted point of view; let us trace the progreſs of the ſoul up the grand ſidereal LADDER of ſeven GATES, and through the revolving ſpheres, which, it has been obſerved, are called in In-

dia the BOOBUNS of purification. That the Hindoos actually entertained notions on this subject entirely consentaneous with those propagated by the institutor of the Mithratic mysteries is evident from the concise, but obscure, passage just cited in page 236. If, however, in my humble attempt farther to illustrate this ancient dogma of the Indian school, I should not be able to produce so many extracts as directly elucidatory of this as of the former subject from the GEETA, I am in hopes the very curious and interesting intelligence, which I am now about to lay before the reader, and which merits his most attentive consideration, will, in a great measure, make amends for that defect. We must, therefore, once more revert to the hallowed cavern of the Persian deity, and to the page of Porphyry, who is the best expositor of the Mithratic theology. Porphyry himself was one of the profoundest critics and scholars that the schools of Greece ever bred, and deeply initiated in all the mystic rites of the ancient recondite philosophy and abstruse metaphysics. He acquaints us, that, "according to Eubulus, Zoroaster, first of all, among *the neighbouring mountains of Persia*, consecrated a natural cell, adorned

adorned with flowers* and watered with fountains, in honour of MITHRA, the father of the universe. For, he thought a cavern an emblem of the world, fabricated by MITHRA; and, in this cave, were many geographical symbols, arranged in the most perfect symmetry and placed at certain distances, which shadowed out the elements and climates of the world."† Porphyry, in the preceding part of this beautiful treatise, had informed his readers that the ancients considered the world as justly typified by a cavern, alluding both to the earthy and stony particles of which it is composed as well as its obscurity and concave form; and that the Persians, intending mystically to represent the descent of the soul into an inferior nature, and its subsequent ascent into the intellectual world, initiated the priest, or candidate in the Mithratic rites, in caverns, or places so fabricated as to resemble them. After the example of Zoroaster, he adds, it was the custom of other nations in succeeding ages to perform initiatory rites in dens and

 caverns,

* Ανθηρον, *floridum*: I know not how otherwise to translate the word, and yet it appears singular enough that a dark and barren cave should be adorned with flowers.

† Vide Porphyrius de Antro Nympharum, p. 256, edit. Cantab. octavo, 1655.

caverns, natural or artificial; for, as they consecrated temples, groves, and altars, to the celeſtial gods; but, to the terreſtrial gods and heroes, altars alone; and, to the ſubterraneous deities, vaults and cells: ſo to the WORLD they dedicated ἀντρα και σπηλαια, caves and dens. Hence, he intimates, the Pythagoreans and the Platoniſts took occaſion to call this world *the dark cavern of the impriſoned ſoul.* Plato, in the ſeventh book of his republic, in which he treats of the condition of man in the natural world, expreſſly ſays, Behold men, as if dwelling in a ſubterranean cavern: and he compares this terrene habitation to the gloomy reſidence of a priſon, through which the ſolar light, imitated by the fires that glow in the receſſes of the cavern, ſhines with a bright and vivifying ray. The Homeric cave of the nymphs, which is the particular ſubject of his eſſay, was ſacred to the NAIADS, becauſe they preſided over fountains; thoſe fountains, which, ever bubbling up in the caverns, were only the myſtic emblem of the intellectual waters which ſweeten and purify the ſoul contaminated with guilt. The fountains were alſo doubtleſs typical of the watery element, as was the fire of the great IGNEOUS PRINCIPLE, that ſubtle, active, ethereal, and reſiſtleſs, ſpi-

rit,

rit, which, diffufed throughout the univerfe, embraces and animates its whole extent. The humid exhalations, which arife from the confluent waters, are an emblem of the fourth element, the air; while their bland and genial vapours ferve as nourifhment to the ethereal beings who hover round, the guardian genii of the folemn retreat. To defcribe the marble urns and confecrated vafes for the reception of the purifying honey, an article ftill of great requeft in the libations and other theological rites of India, and the veftments of purple woven by the nymphs, all myftical emblems ufed in the rites of initiation, and explained by Porphyry, would be of lefs immediate utility than to confider the aftronomical fymbols, of which, as I have curforily ftated from another of their moft celebrated philofophers, they were by no means deftitute in the reprefentation of the ftages of the Metempfychofis. From that author we learned that they erected in thefe caverns a high ladder, which had SEVEN GATES, according to the number of the planets through which the foul gradually afcended to the fupreme manfion of felicity. I muft here obferve that the word GATE, which is a part of Afiatic palaces by far the moft confpicuous and magnificent, and upon

adorning of which immenſe ſums are often expended, is an expreſſion, that, throughout the Eaſt, is figuratively uſed for the manſion itſelf. Indeed it ſeems to be thus denominated with ſingular propriety, ſince, as thoſe of my readers who have reſided in Aſiatic regions well know, it is under thoſe GATES that converſations are holden, that hoſpitality to the paſſing traveller is diſpenſed, and the moſt important tranſactions in commerce are frequently carried on. Captain Hamilton, giving an account of Fort St. George, obſerves, " that the GATE of that town, called the ſea-gate, being very ſpacious, was formerly the common exchange, where merchants of all nations reſorted about eleven o'clock to treat of buſineſs or merchandiſe."* Aſtronomy, deriving its birth in Aſia, and exploring nature and language for new ſymbols, ſoon ſeized upon this allegorical expreſſion as highly deſcriptive of her romantic ideas, and the title was tranſferred from terreſtrial houſes to the ſpheres. Hence, in the Arabian aſtronomy, thoſe conſtellations in the heavens, neareſt which the moon, during her monthly revolutions, remains every night, are called the MANSIONS

OF

* See Hamilton's Voyage, vol. i. p. 368.

OF THE MOON,* which, according to the Arabian computation, amount in number to twenty-eight, according to the Indian, to only twenty-ſeven, manſions; and theſe gates muſt, therefore, be conſidered as houſes, or ſpheres, through which the ſoul paſſes in her courſe to the centre of light and felicity. It may here be remarked that the expreſſion occurs frequently in holy writ, often in the former ſenſe, and ſometimes even in the aſtronomical alluſion of the word. In the former acceptation we read, in Eſther, ii. 19, of the *Jew Mordecai ſitting in the king's* GATE: in Lamentations, v. 14, *that the elders have ceaſed from the* GATE: and, in Ruth, iii. 11, it is uſed in a ſenſe remarkably figurative; *all the* GATE (that is, houſe) *of my people know thou art virtuous.* In the ſecond acceptation, the word as well as the attendant ſymbol itſelf, to our aſtoniſhment, occur in the account of Jacob's viſion of the LADDER WHOSE TOP REACHED TO HEAVEN, and in the exclamation, THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN. This circumſtance

* Theſe MANSIONS OF THE MOON are, from Mr. Coſtard's Arabian aſtronomy, accurately marked on the celeſtial globe, made and ſold by Mr. George Adams, in Fleet-ſtreet, whoſe obliging kindneſs to the author during the compoſition of a work, in which aſtronomy and theology are ſo intimately connected, he thus publicly and gratefully acknowledges.

cannot fail of exciting in the reader the utmoſt ſurpriſe, ſince it is hence manifeſted to have been an original patriarchal ſymbol, and will hereafter be brought by me in evidence that there was among the poſt-diluvian anceſtors of the human race an aſtronomy older than has yet been *proved* to exiſt, and poſſibly tinctured with ante-diluvian philoſophy. A ſimilar idea occurs in Iſaiah, xxxviii. 10; *I ſhall go to the* GATES *of the grave*; and in Matthew, xvi. 18; *the* GATES *of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it:* nor is it impoſſible but our bleſſed Lord himſelf might ſpeak in alluſion to the popular notion of the two aſtronomical GATES celeſtial and terreſtrial, when, in Matthew, vii. 13, he ſaid, *Enter ye in at the ſtrait* GATE; *for, wide is the* GATE *and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat: becauſe ſtrait is the* GATE *and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

But let us return to the Homeric cave, concerning the fabrication, intention, and ornaments, of which Porphyry has given us a diſquiſition, which, however obſcure it may appear from the very partial information on this ſubject which has deſcended to us from the ancients, will more than ſufficiently ſerve

to

to convince us how deeply were blended together their profound aſtronomical and metaphyſical ſpeculations. This cave had two entrances, or GATES, as they are called even by Homer; the one of which looked to the SOUTH, the other to the NORTH.

> Perpetual waters through the grotto glide,
> A lofty GATE unfolds on either ſide;
> That, to the north, is pervious to mankind,
> The ſacred ſouth to immortals is conſign'd.

On this paſſage the great philoſopher remarks, " There are two extremities in the heavens: viz. the winter ſolſtice, than which no part of heaven is nearer to the ſouth; and the ſummer ſolſtice, which is ſituated next to the north. But the ſummer tropic, that is, the ſolſtitial circle, is in Cancer, and the winter tropic in Capricorn. And, ſince Cancer is the neareſt to the earth, it is deſervedly attributed to the moon, which is itſelf proximate to the earth. But ſince the ſouthern pole, from its great diſtance, is inviſible to us, Capricorn is aſſigned to Saturn, who is the higheſt and moſt remote of all the planets. Again, the ſigns from Cancer to Capricorn are ſituated in the following order; the firſt is Leo, called, by aſtrologers, the Houſe of the

SUN;

SUN; afterwards Virgo, or the Houſe of Mercury; Libra, of Venus; Scorpio, of Mars; Sagittarius, of Jupiter; and Capricornus, or the Houſe of Saturn. But from Capricorn, in an inverſe order, Sagittarius is attributed to Saturn; Piſces to Jupiter; Aries to Mars; Taurus to Venus; Gemini to Mercury; and, laſt of all, Cancer to the MOON. From among the number of theſe, theologiſts conſider Cancer and Capricorn as two ports; Plato calls them two GATES. Of theſe, they affirm that Cancer is the gate through which *ſouls deſcend*, but Capricorn that through which they *aſcend*, and exchange a material for a divine condition of being. Cancer is, indeed, northern, and adapted to deſcent; but Capricorn is ſouthern, and accommodated to aſcent: and, indeed, the GATES of the cave, which look to the north, are with great propriety ſaid to be pervious to the deſcent of men; while the ſouthern GATES are not the avenues of the gods, but of ſouls aſcending to the gods. On this account the poet does not ſay it is the paſſage of the gods, but of immortals, which appellation is alſo common to our ſouls, whether in their whole eſſence, or from ſome particular and moſt excellent part only they are denominated immortal. It is reported that

that Parmenides mentions these two PORTS in his book, concerning the nature of things; as likewise that they were not unknown to the Egyptians and Romans: for, the Romans celebrate their Saturnalia when the sun is in Capricorn; and, during this festivity, the servants wear the shoes of those that are free, and all things are distributed among them in common; the legislator intimating, by this ceremony, that those, who are servants at present by the condition of their birth, will be hereafter liberated by the Saturnalian feast, and by the house attributed to Saturn, *i. e.* Capricorn; when, reviving in that sign, and being divested of the material garments of generation, they shall return to their pristine felicity and to the fountain of life. But since the path beginning from Capricorn is retrograde, and pertains to descent; hence the origin of the word Januarius, or January, from *janua*, a gate, which is the space of time measured by the sun, while, returning from Capricorn towards the east, he directs his course to the northern parts. But, with the Egyptians, the beginning of the year is not Aquarius, as among the Romans, but Cancer: for, the star SOTHIS borders on Cancer, which star the Greeks denominate Κυνος, or the

the Dog. When this ſtar riſes, they celebrate the calends of the month, which begins their year; becauſe this is the place of the heavens where generation commences, by which the world ſubſiſts. On this account the doors of the Homeric cavern are not dedicated to the eaſt and the weſt, nor to the equinoctial ſigns, Aries and Libra, but to the north and ſouth, and particularly to thoſe ports, or celeſtial ſigns, which are the neareſt of all to theſe quarters of the world: and this becauſe the preſent cave is ſacred to SOULS and to NYMPHS, the divinities of waters."*

A paſſage remarkably conſonant to the preceding occurs in Macrobius, a writer profoundly verſed in all the myſteries of the Oriental world.

"Pythagoras (ſays that writer†) thought that the empire of Pluto began downwards from the milky way, becauſe ſouls falling thence appear already to have receded from the gods. Hence he aſſerts that the nutriment of milk is firſt offered to infants, becauſe their firſt motion commences from the Galaxy, when they begin to fall into terrene bodies.

* Vide Porphyrius de Antro Nympharum, p. 265.

† Macrobius in Somnium Scipionis, lib. i. cap. 12, p. 61, edit. oct. Variorum. Lugd. Bat. 1670.

bodies. On this account, ſince thoſe who are about to deſcend are yet in Cancer, and have not left the Galaxy, they rank in the order of gods; but when, by falling, they arrive at the Lion, in this conſtellation they enter on the exordium of their future condition; becauſe, in the Lion, the rudiments of birth and certain primary exerciſes of human nature commence. But Aquarius is oppoſite the Lion, and preſently ſets after the Lion riſes! hence, when the ſun is in Aquarius, funeral rites are performed to departed ſouls, becauſe he is then carried in a ſign which is contrary or adverſe to human life." In a ſucceeding part Macrobius adds, "As ſoon, therefore, as the ſoul gravitates towards the body, in this firſt production of herſelf, ſhe begins to experience a *material tumult*, that is, matter flowing into her eſſence. And this is what Plato remarks in the Phædo, that the ſoul is drawn into the body, ſtaggering with recent intoxication, ſignifying by this the new drink of matter's impetuous flood, through which the ſoul, becoming defiled and heavy, is drawn into a terrene ſituation. But the ſtarry cup, placed between Cancer and the Lion, is a ſymbol of this myſtic truth, ſignifying that deſcending ſouls firſt experience intoxication

toxication in that part of the heavens, through the influx of matter. Hence oblivion, the companion of intoxication, begins to creep into the receffes of the foul; for, if fouls retained in their defcent to bodies the memory of divine concerns of which they were confcious in the heavens, there would be no diffention among men concerning divinity. But all, indeed, in defcending, drink of oblivion; though fome more, and others lefs."

This curious and myftical writer finally afferts: "The foul, therefore, falling with this firft weight from the zodiac and milky way into each of the fubject fpheres, is not only clothed with the acceffion of a luminous body, but produces the particular motions which it is to exercife in the refpective orbs. Thus, in Saturn, it energizes according to a ratiocinative and intellective power, which they call λογιστικον and θεωρητικον: in the fphere of Jove, according to the power of acting, which is called πρακτικον: in that of Mars, according to the order of courage, which is denominated θυμικον: in the orb of the SUN, according to a fenfitive and plantaftic nature, which they call αισθητικον and φανταστικον: but according to the motion of defire, which is denominated ἐπιθυμητικον in the planet Venus; of pronoun-

cing

cing and interpreting what it perceives, which is called ἑρμηνευτικον in the orb of Mercury; and, according to a plantal nature and a power of acting on body, which is denominated φυτικον when it enters the lunar globe. And this ſphere, as it is the laſt among the divine orders, ſo it is the firſt in our terrene ſituation. For, this body, as it is the dregs of divine concerns, ſo it is the firſt ſubſtance of an animal. And this is the difference between terrene and ſupernal bodies, (under which laſt I comprehend the heavens, the ſtars, and the other elements,) that the latter are called upwards to be the ſeat of the ſoul, and enjoy immortality from the very nature of the region, etherial, pure, ſublime; but the ſoul is drawn down to theſe terrene bodies, and is, on this account, reported to die when it is incloſed in this fallen region and the ſeat of mortality. Nor ought it to cauſe any perplexity that we have ſo often made uſe of that term, the *death of the ſoul*, which we have pronounced to be IMMORTAL: for, the ſoul is not extinguiſhed by its temporal demerſion; ſince, when it deſerves to be purified from the contagion of vice, through its entire refinement from body, it will be reſtored to the

the light of perennial life, and will return to its priſtine integrity and perfection."*

During the progreſs of this arduous undertaking it has been my misfortune to have *toiled alone*, or only aſſiſted by ſuch Sanſcreet publications as have yet ſeen the light under the ſanction of Sir William Jones, Mr. Halhed, and Mr. Wilkins. Had the two latter gentlemen, who are the beſt Sanſcreet ſcholars now in Europe, deigned to honour my infant work with the ſame notice which it has experienced from the great Orientaliſt, who is unfolding to the Aſiatic world the mild laws of this country, and diſpenſing juſtice according to that noble ſyſtem of juriſprudence, to the once-oppreſſed progeny of Hindoſtan, this production might poſſibly have come before the public leſs obſcured with error and leſs unworthy of their applauſe. Upon the preſent curious and intereſting topic, in particular, an occaſional communication with theſe celebrated Indian ſcholars would, doubtleſs, have enabled me to throw new light, and in a higher degree to gratify excited curioſity. Happily, however, not deprived of the advantage of their productions,

I proceed

* Macrobius in Somn. Scip. cap. 12, p. 368, ejuſdem edit.

I proceed to glean ſuch ſcattered fragments of information as appear to me elucidatory of the ſidereal migration of the ſoul aſpiring after the raptures of divine abſorption in BRAHME, the ſupreme good. "The Indians (ſays Mr. Halhed) have in all ages believed in the tranſmigration of ſouls, which they denominate KAYAPREWAESH and KAYAPELUT: this latter term literally anſwers to the word Metempſychoſis. An ancient Shaſter, called the Geeta, written by Vyaſa, has a beautiful ſtanza upon the ſyſtem of the Tranſmigration, which he compares to a change of dreſs. Their creed, in this reſpect, is, that thoſe ſouls which have attained to a certain degree of purity, either by the innocence of their manners or the ſeverity of their mortifications, are removed to regions of happineſs proportioned to their reſpective merits; but that thoſe, who cannot ſo far ſurmount the prevalence of bad example and the forcible degeneracy of the times as to deſerve ſuch a promotion, are condemned to undergo continual puniſhment in the animation of ſucceſſive animal forms, until, at the ſtated period, another renovation of the FOUR YUGS, or grand periods, ſhall commence upon the diſſolution of the preſent."

The preceding extracts have sufficiently evinced the truth of these observations by Mr. Halhed. With respect to the sidereal migration, we are obliged with the following additional intelligence.

" They suppose that there are fourteen BHOOBUNS, or spheres, seven below and six above the earth. The seven inferior worlds are said to be altogether inhabited by an infinite variety of serpents. The earth itself is called BHOOR, and mankind who inhabit it BHOOR-LOGUE. The spheres, gradually ascending thence, are, 1. BOBUR, whose inhabitants are called BOBUR-LOGUE; 2. the SWERGEH-LOGUE; 3. the MAHURR-LOGUE; 4. the JUNNEH-LOGUE; 5. the TUPPEH-LOGUE; 6. the SUTTEE-LOGUE." The term LOGUE, according to Mr. Holwell, signifies literally a people, a multitude, a congregation; and DEWTAH-LOGUE the angelic host.*

" The Bobur is the immediate vault of the visible heavens, in which the sun, moon, and stars, are placed. The Swergeh is the first paradise and general receptacle for those who merit a removal from the earth. The Mahurr-logue are the Fakeers and such persons as, by dint of prayer, have acquired an extraordinary

* Holwell, vol. ii. p. 35.

ordinary degree of sanctity. The Junneh-logue are also the souls of pious and moral men, and beyond this sphere they are not supposed to pass without some uncommon merits and qualifications. The sphere of Tuppeh is the reward of those who have all their lives performed some wonderful act of penance and mortification, or who have died martyrs for their religion. The Suttee, or highest sphere, is the residence of Brahma and his particular favourites, whence they are also called Brahma-logue. This is the place of destination for those men who have never uttered a falsehood during their whole lives, and for those women who have voluntarily burned themselves with their husbands."*

To these fourteen spheres of reward and punishment the Geeta in various places directly, but obscurely, alludes. In that episode, Arjun, just ready to stain his sword with the blood of his relatives, assembled to oppose him in the field of battle, is checked by the reflection that the regions of Naraka, the boobuns of serpents, " are provided for those who murder their relations." This, however, is not the only bitter reflection to which his

 painful

* See the preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, p. 46, edit. quarto, London, 1776.

painful ſituation gives birth; the baneful conſequences will extend to others, ſince the dead themſelves are affected by the crimes of the living. The forefathers of their ſlain brethren, "being deprived of the ceremonies of cakes and water offered to their manes, will ſink down into the *infernal regions*." Geeta, p. 3. The ceremony of the Stradha, which is here alluded to, has been explained before; to which I ſhall now add, from Mr. Wilkins upon the paſſage, that, in thoſe regions, the condemned are doomed to dwell "for a period *proportioned to their crimes*, after which they riſe again to inhabit the bodies of unclean beaſts." Both the aſtronomical term and the allegorical alluſion are in direct terms mentioned in the following paſſage. "There are three paſſages to NARAKA; luſt, anger, and avarice, which are the deſtroyers of the tranſmigrating ſoul; wherefore a man ſhould avoid them; for, being freed from theſe GATES OF SIN, which ariſe from the influence of the TAMA-GOON, (thoſe who inculcate the worſhip of departed ſpirits,) he advanceth his own happineſs, and at length he goeth the JOURNEY OF THE MOST HIGH." Geeta, p. 118.

In the paſſages before-cited, the word *manſion*, or *abode*, is frequently uſed; and it has been

THE MATSE AVATAR

Barlow sculp.

The first Indian AVATAR, denominated that of MATSE; representing the incarnation of VEESHNU in the form of A FISH: & in the opinion of S.r William Jones, pointedly [alluding] to the GENERAL DELUGE.

been proved, that the ſuperior Boobuns are not leſs the manſions of departed piety than thoſe of Naraka are of the guilty. Concerning the ſuperior Boobuns, there is one or two of thoſe extracts ſo very expreſs, that I muſt be permitted to bring them again before the eye of the reader; in particular I wiſh him to re-peruſe that paſſage in which Kreeſhna tells Arjun, that ALL THE REGIONS between this and the ABODE of Brahma afford but a tranſient reſidence; and that in which the ſame incarnate deity declares, that the virtuous ſhall be rewarded with "the REGIONS OF EENDRA, the prince of celeſtial beings, in which HEAVEN they feaſt upon celeſtial food and divine enjoyment." Geeta, p. 80. "They, who are acquainted with day and night, know that the day of Brahma is as a thouſand revolutions of the YUGS,* and that his night extendeth for a thouſand more: as, on the coming of that day, all things proceed from inviſibility to *viſibility*, ſo, on the approach of that night, they are all diſſolved in that which is called *inviſible*: even the univerſe itſelf, having exiſt-

* The YUGS are certain grand periods, alluding to the revolutions of the heavenly bodies: they are in number four, and will be amply explained hereafter. The vanity of the Brahmin chronologiſts has induced them to apply to terreſtrial concerns the vaſt periods uſed in ſidereal computation.

ed, is again diſſolved; and now again, on the approach of Brahma's day, by the ſame divine over-ruling neceſſity, it is re-produced. That which, upon the diſſolution of all things beſide, is not deſtroyed, muſt be ſuperior and of another nature from that viſibility: it is inviſible and eternal. He, who is thus called inviſible and incorruptible, is even he who is called the SUPREME ABODE; which, men having once obtained, they never return to earth: that is my MANSION." Alluſive, doubtleſs, to the tranſmigration of the ſoul through the ſeven ſidereal abodes of ſpirits in the progreſs of purification, all finally terminating in the moſt ſublime and exalted, Arjoon, in page 94 of the ſame epiſode, in this ſtyle of elevated piety, addreſſes the Supreme Being. "Thou, O mighty Being, greater than Brahma, art the prime Creator! eternal God of gods! the world's MANSION! Thou art the incorruptible Being, diſtinct from all things tranſient! Thou art before all gods, the ancient POORUSH, and the ſupreme ſupporter of the univerſe! Thou knoweſt all things, and art worthy to be known! Thou art the SUPREME MANSION; and by thee, O infinite Form! the univerſe was ſpread abroad." In page 75, recently cited, occurs that very curious

ous passage quoted in a former part of this Dissertation, as having an undoubted astronomical allusion, and which I shall again insert with the addition of the context, since it appears very evidently to inculcate a doctrine not only congenial with that of the Greek philosophers, but with the hypothesis of the two principles of LIGHT and DARKNESS, or rather GOOD and EVIL, in the Persian code of philosophical theology. "I will now (continues Creeshna) speak to thee of that time in which, should a devout man die, he will never return; and of that time, in which, dying, he shall return again upon the earth. Those holy men who are acquainted with BRAHME, departing this life in the fiery light of the day, in the bright season of the moon, WITHIN THE SIX MONTHS OF THE SUN'S NORTHERN course, go unto him; but those who depart in the gloomy night of the moon's dark season, and whilst THE SUN IS YET WITHIN THE SOUTHERN PARTS OF HIS JOURNEY, ascend, for a while, into the regions of the moon, and again return to mortal birth. These two, LIGHT and DARKNESS, are esteemed the world's eternal ways. He, who walketh in the *former* path, (of light, or piety,) returneth not; whilst he, who walketh in the latter path, (darkness, or evil,)

evil,) cometh back again upon the earth." Geeta, p. 76. It is impoſſible to avoid obſerving, in this paſſage, the origin of the doctrine of the TWO PRINCIPLES of the Perſian philoſophers, with which nation, it has already been obſerved, the Indians had an immemorial intercourſe.

SECTION

SECTION VI.

In this ſhort intervening Section, which prevents the immediate Continuation of the Hiſtory of the ancient Myſteries, ſome remarkable Teſtimonies, in Proof of the above Aſſertions, are brought from certain ſcarce and valuable Manuſcripts, which have been imported into Europe by learned Oriental Travellers, and which contain Engravings, executed in India, illuſtrative of their ancient Doctrines in regard to the Metempſychoſis, as well as of the early Periods of their Hiſtory.—A Deſcription of one very curious aſtronomical Plate, which repreſents the Convulſion of Nature at the General Deluge, or the COURMA AVATAR.—*A Digreſſion on that Subject, proving that all the three firſt Avatars, or Incarnations of the Deity, are aſtronomical Allegories alluſive to that calamitous Event.*

THE paſſages preſented to the reader in the preceding ſection are not the only ones in which the gradual aſcent of the ſoul through

through the planets, or ſpheres of purification, is plainly intimated in the Geeta. They are however ſufficient for our purpoſe, and, in proof that the Indians actually had, in the remoteſt æras, in their ſyſtem of theology, the ſidereal ladder of ſeven gates, ſo univerſally made uſe of as a ſymbol throughout all the Eaſt, I have now to inform the reader of the following circumſtance: — there exiſts at preſent, in the French king's library at Paris, a book of paintings entirely alluſive to the Indian mythology and the incarnations of Veeſhnu, in one of which is exhibited this very ſymbol, upon which the ſouls of men are repreſented as aſcending and deſcending, according to the received opinion of the ſidereal Metempſychoſis in Aſia. Of this curious volume a friend at Paris has procured me very minute information, and I have hopes of preſenting my readers with a correct copy of this painting before theſe extenſive Diſſertations ſhall have been concluded.

Two other books, adorned with ſimilar paintings, illuſtrative of Indian ſubjects, which are in the poſſeſſion of the literati of this country, deſerve, in this place, particular notice. The firſt is that in the Bodleian library, preſented to the Univerſity of Oxford by Mr.

Pope,

Pope, and affirmed, in the letter of that author which accompanied the donation, to contain "one hundred and ſeventy-eight portraits of the Indian rajahs, continued down to Timur, and the Great Moguls his ſucceſſors, as far as Aurungzebe."* The account of this book by Mr. Cleland, prefixed to Dr. White's and Mr. Davy's tranſlation of the Inſtitutes of Timur, eſtabliſhes the authenticity of it; for, "that the pictures it contains are not fancy pictures there is this ſolid reaſon to believe, it being well known that ſuch a ſet of pictures actually exiſts in the royal palace." He adds, "it is obſervable, that the Mooriſh or Mohamedan ſovereigns of Hindoſtan are, in this collection, diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of Gentoo deſcent by the faſhion of the ſkirts of their robes, which, in the Gentoos, hang on each ſide, cut at the bottom into an angular form, as all the rajahs wear them at this day for an enſign of royalty."† From this book I hope to obtain the permiſſion of the Univerſity to engrave the portraits of ſome of the more diſtinguiſhed characters that have ſwayed the imperial

* Theſe are the words of Mr. Pope's letter, written in the year 1737, and inſerted in the Preface to the Inſtitutes of Timur.

† See the Preface to Dr. White's Inſtitutes of Timur.

imperial ſceptre of a people, who, with their auguſt ſovereigns, have been hitherto ſo little known; of a people, who, in the remote and beautiful regions of Hindoſtan, for many ages, ſeem to have ſhunned all intercourſe with their fellow-mortals, and, at preſent, are very inaccurately delineated on the hiſtoric page in proportion to the importance and extent of their vaſt empire in Aſia, to the conſummate wiſdom of their policy, and the diſtinguiſhed ſplendour of their exploits.

The remaining volume, which merits our preſent notice, and will claim our more particular attention hereafter, is that in the poſſeſſion of the Society of Antiquaries in London, preſented, I believe, by Mr. Haſtings, and which, if I may judge from a ſurvey of it, permitted me by the obliging attention of the ſecretary of that ſociety, is entirely upon the ſubject of the nine incarnations of the god Veeſhnu. In rather a tranſient review of its contents I was particularly ſtruck with a minute delineation of the COURMA AVATAR, or Veeſhnu's deſcent in the form of a tortoiſe to ſupport the earth ſinking in the ocean, and of the curious Indian hiſtorical fable of the Soors and Aſoors churning that ocean with the mountain Manda. Around this vaſt moun-

tain

tain the ſerpent ASOOKEE is repreſented as twined in dreadful folds, by way of a rope, at the head and tail of which thoſe imaginary beings are pulling with all their might, to make the churned deep diſgorge the precious things ſwallowed up in a certain great deluge, which, notwithſtanding all ſceptical oppoſition, was undoubtedly the deluge of Noah. The above circumſtances muſt appear ſo very romantic to the reader, that, as ſome period will ſtill elapſe before I can proceed to the hiſtorical detail and explanation of the Avatars, I ſhall inſert a few lines, illuſtrative of it from Mr. Wilkins's tranſlation of that part of the Mahabbarat in which it occurs, and which he will find in page 146 of the Geeta. This account, adduced immediately from ſuch high and reſpectable authority, will at once ſerve to gratify curioſity and reſcue myſelf from cenſure in enumerating particulars ſo wildly theological, but ſtill ſo abſolutely neceſſary to be known to the reader before he can obtain the full comprehenſion of the ancient Sanſcreet hiſtory of Hindoſtan; it will likewiſe afford a ſpecimen of the romantic ſtyle in which that firſt and moſt celebrated Indian hiſtory is written.

Prefatory to this extract I must observe, that the Soors, being assembled in solemn consultation upon the sparkling summit of the great golden mountain MERU, or SOMMEIR, asserted, in the Geographical Dissertation, to be situated in the centre of our globe, and to be of the altitude of at least 16,000 YOJANS,* were meditating the discovery of the AMREETA, or water of immortality, under which allegory is shadowed out the re-animation of nature after the general desolation made by the deluge. The sea was to be deeply agitated by the impetuous rotation of the mountain Mandar; but, as the united bands of Dewtahs were unable to remove this mountain, they went before Veeshnu, who was sitting with Brahma, and addressed them in these words: "Exert, sovereign beings, your most superior wisdom to remove the mountain Mandar, and employ your utmost power for our good." Veeshnu and Brahma having replied, "It shall be according to your wish:" HE, with the lotos eye, directed the king of serpents to appear. Ananta arose, and was instructed in that work by Brahma, and commanded by Narayen

* The YOJAN is an ancient Indian measure, in extent about four miles.

Narayen to perform it. Then Ananta, by his power, took up that king of mountains, together with all its forefts and every inhabitant thereof; and the Soors accompanied him into the prefence of the Ocean, whom they addreffed, faying, "We will ftir up thy waters to obtain the Amreeta;" and the lord of the waters replied, "Let me alfo have a fhare, feeing I am to bear the violent agitations that will be caufed by the whirling of the mountain." Then the Soors and Afoors fpake unto Courma-rajah, the king of the tortoifes, upon the ftrand of the ocean, and faid, "My lord is able to be the fupporter of this mountain." The tortoife replied, "Be it fo!" and it was placed upon his back.

"So the mountain being fet upon the back of the tortoife, Eendra began to whirl it about as it were a machine. The mountain Mandar ferved as a churn, and the ferpent Vafookee for the rope; and thus, in *former days*, did the Dewtahs, the Afoors, and the Danoos, begin to ftir up the waters of the ocean for the difcovery of the Amreeta. The mighty Afoors were employed on the fide of the ferpent's head, whilft all the Soors affembled about his tail. Ananta, that fovereign Dew, ftood near Narayen.

"They

" They now pull forth the ſerpent's head repeatedly, and as often let it go: while there iſſued from his mouth, thus violently drawing to and fro by the Soors and Aſoors, a continual ſtream of fire, and ſmoke, and wind; *which aſcending in thick clouds replete with lightning, it began to rain down* upon the heavenly bands, who were already fatigued with their labour, whilſt a ſhower of flowers was ſhaken from the top of the mountain, covering the heads of all, both Soors and Aſoors. In the mean time *the roaring of the ocean, whilſt violently agitated* with the whirling of the mountain Mandar by the Soors and Aſoors, was like the bellowing of a mighty cloud. Thouſands of the various productions of the waters were torn to pieces by the mountain, and confounded with the briny flood; and every ſpecific being of the deep and all the inhabitants *of the great abyſs which is below the earth were annihilated*; whilſt, from the violent agitation of the mountain, the foreſt-trees were daſhed againſt each other, and precipitated from its utmoſt height, with all the birds thereon; from the violent confrication of all which a raging fire was produced, involving the whole mountain with ſmoke and flame, as with a dark blue cloud and the vivid flaſh of lightning.

The

The lion and the retreating elephant are overtaken by the devouring flames, and every vital being and every individual object are consumed in the general conflagration. The raging flames, thus spreading destruction on all sides, were at length quenched by a shower of cloud borne water poured down by the immortal Eendra. And now a heterogeneous stream of the concocted juice of various trees and plants ran down into the briny flood. It was from this milk-like stream of juices, produced from those streams, trees, and plants, and a mixture of melted gold, that the Soors obtained their immortality."*

Concerning these extravagant mythological details of the Hindoos, I must remark, that however mysterious the allegory, and however wild and romantic the language in which it is clothed, this fact may be depended upon, that there, in general, lies concealed at the bottom some physical meaning or deep theological truth. Divested of its inflated diction and fabulous incidents, the invention of an Oriental fancy, what can this general and stupendous convulsion of nature;—the mountain buried in the tempestuous bosom of the ocean; the ocean roaring and raging amidst the conflict

* Geeta, p. 146, 147, 148.

flict of contending elements; the torrents of defcending rain poured down by Eendra, the Hindoo good of the firmament; the total annihilation of every living thing on the mountain, and of all the inhabitants of *the great abyfs* which is below the earth; (an expreffion very fimilar to the Scripture-phrafe of *all the fountains of the great deep*;) — what can all this accumulation of magnificent and dreadful images fhadow out except the defolation of the earth during the period of the univerfal deluge; when the Soors and Afoors, who may be confidered as the ætherial minifters of the divine vengeance, were commiffioned to harafs the agitated globe? What can the incarnation of Veefhnu, the preferving power of India, in the form of a vaft tortoife, which incarnation conftitutes the fecond or COURMA AVATAR, to fupport the ponderous mafs on the ftrand of the ocean, portend, but the benevolent intervention of Providence, perfonified by the incarnation of Veefhnu, to fave from total deftruction a perifhing world? Who is that phyfician fo renowned in ancient Sanfcreet hiftories, the great DEW Danwantaree, who at length rofe from the churned ocean, the white foam of which refembled milk, bearing in his hand a facred vafe full of

the

the water of life, and who himſelf is even repreſented in ſome of thoſe hiſtories as a tranſformation of Veeſhnu, who, I ſay, is to be underſtood by that fictitious character, unleſs the venerable ſage who roſe from the ocean, who gave new life to his expiring ſpecies, and in his family upheld the human race: that pious patriarch, who, after his emerging from the hoary deep, *builded an altar unto the Lord,* and offered the *firſt grateful oblation* after the deluge; (circumſtances recorded amidſt the conſtellations of the Southern ſphere;) that mythologic character, who is repreſented upon it as the *ſacrificer of the beaſt*; that profound philoſopher whoſe knowledge of the ante-diluvian aſtronomy enabled him to form that ſphere, and who placed THE SHIP, by Grecian mythologiſts uſurped, and ridiculouſly called ARGO, there? The Greeks, however, remarkably corroborating my hypotheſis, denominated this aſteriſm of the SACRIFICER CHIRON, whom Pliny deſcribes "as the ſon of Saturn (TIME) and Phillira, the inventor of the BOTANICAL and MEDICAL art."* And juſtly may the SACRIFICER be denominated Chiron, that true Chiron of antiquity, though not of Grecian origin, nor the preceptor of

 Achilles;

* Plinii Nat. Hiſt. lib. vii. cap. 56.

Achilles; that great botanift, who firft planted the vine and returned to the ground that infinite variety "*of medical herbs and innumerable feeds,*" which, in the ancient Sanfcreet hiftories, and particularly in Sir William Jones's tranflation of the BHAGAVAT, MENU is reprefented as taking into the ark for the exprefs purpofe of renovating decayed vegetation after the deluge; that nobler CENTAUR, who was indeed born of a *cloud*, in the fame manner as the Chinefe Fohi is reprefented in their hiftories to have had a *rainbow* for his progenitor; who, as the name *Centaur* properly fignifies, firft tamed the fierce bull, and who, having taught mankind the ufe of agriculture, was thence not only reprefented in all the Oriental mythologies by the apt fymbol of the BULL, but, if M. Anquetil, in the Zend-Avefta, may be credited, in the ancient Perfian hiftories, was called *l'homme-taureau.** Such is the true meaning of this Avatar; and fuch, in my humble opinion, is the true Danwantaree of India, who fprang from the foam of the churned ocean, bearing the Amreeta, or vital ambrofia, to the renovated world. I would not be underftood, however, to have afferted that Danwantaree and Noah are the fame

* See M. Anquetil du Perron's Zend-Avefta, tom. iii. p. 363.

ſame perſon, except in a mythological ſenſe; for, Menu, or Satyaurata, who was the author of the famous Inſtitutes, at firſt orally promulgated by that legiſlator, afterwards committed to writing, and called after him MENUMSRITI, is the undoubted and only genuine Noah of India; but I mean, that, under the character of Danwantaree riſing from the ocean, this venerable perſonage is intended and ſymbolized. According to M. Sonnerat, he is generally depicted in the pagodas, ſacred to Veeſhnu, as a learned man, in profound meditation, with a book in his hand.

Sir William Jones, without favouring us with any farther explanation of his meaning, confeſſes himſelf to be of opinion, that a conſiderable portion of this particular Avatar relates to aſtronomy. For my own part, I entertain little doubt but that the ſerpent Aſookee, whoſe enormous body enfolded the globe, is no other than the celeſtial ſerpent, or dragon, whoſe baleful influence is repreſented in all Oriental ſyſtems of aſtrology to be ſo fatal to the revolving ſpheres, or elſe that whimſical repreſentation of a ſtill more viſionary dragon, formed by the courſe of the moon near the ECLIPTIC, of whoſe BELLY, HEAD, and TAIL, is exhibited, in a preceding page, an aſtrono-

mico-mythological engraving. By this allegory, do not the Brahmin aſtronomers mean to indicate that ſome dreadful poſition of the planetary orbs, which are often repreſented, in Sanſcreet writings, as perſonified Dewtahs, occaſioned the grand convulſion; or that ſome fatal ECLIPSE, which ever happens near that region of the heaven where their fancies have fixed their imaginary Dragon, portended and accompanied it? Surely the ſuppoſition of ſuch an event, as a ſecondary cauſe, proves neither bad theology nor deſpicable philoſophy to exiſt in Hindoſtan; for, notwithſtanding ſome difficulties in Whiſton's ſyſtem, that a comet paſſed at that remote æra near the orbit of the earth, and cauſed the inundation, that hypotheſis is not deſtitute of able advocates. But we ſee that, by this relation, a devouring fire, as well as a tempeſtuous ocean, contributed to the general devaſtation. Is it not poſſible, that ſome of the more ancient Sanſcreet books may contain, traditionally handed down, a genuine and circumſtantial relation of this awful event? But, if that ſhould not be the caſe, is not this account entirely conformable to the ingenious conjectures of the great naturaliſt Mr. Whitehurſt, who is decidedly of opinion, that fire, burſt-

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ing from the internal regions of the earth, greatly contributed to bring on the dreadful cataſtrophe in which nature agonized and a world was deſtroyed. Mr. Whitehurſt does not ſtand ſingle in this opinion. His ſuppoſition is corroborated by one of the greateſt chemiſts of the age, WATSON, a name on which titles can confer no additional ſplendour. A more full inveſtigation, however, of this point, and ſome others of equal novelty and importance to the theological and literary world, muſt be reſerved for that portion of this hiſtory which treats of the coſmogony of the Hindoos.

Since the Avatars themſelves, that is, the deſcents of the deity in a human form, may be conſidered as connected with, if not as originally giving birth to, the doctrine of the Metempſychoſis; for, with the Indians, that deity is conſidered only as the *Anima Mundi*, or Soul of the World, of whom the particular definition in the Bhagavat is, that "HE IS EVERY WHERE ALWAYS;" it will not be thought entirely digreſſive, if, while upon this ſubject, I purſue ſomewhat farther the reflections to which the Courma-Avatar has given birth. Truth, therefore, compels me to add, to what has been already obſerved, that the more minutely the *three firſt Avatars* are exa-

mined, the more directly will each of those Avatars be found to be illustrative of the great event above alluded to; while the united evidence, arising from them, reflects a light upon that event greater than has yet radiated upon it from any page of Gentile antiquity. "They all three," says the president of the Asiatic Society, "apparently relate to some stupendous convulsion of our globe from the fountains of the deep."* In direct proof of Sir William's assertion, I shall, in this place, somewhat prematurely, present the reader with a print of the first of those Avatars, which was copied by one of the Roman missionaries from the walls of an Indian pagoda, on which the ten transformations of Veeshnu were delineated in the successive order in which they take place. In justice to myself I must remark, that this print properly belongs to the first volume of my history, in which all the Avatars are distinctly described, and most of them engraved; but as it is possible that the increased sum, at which I have been obliged to fix the price of these volumes, may unfortunately deprive me of the continued patronage, throughout the work, of some of my subscribers, I here, with grateful attention, submit

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 235.

mit a duplicate of the plate for their particular accommodation and inſpection.

The following are in brief the outlines of the allegory, extracted from the Bhagavat, where may be found the paſſage from the ſame book cited above.

Near the cloſe of the laſt CALPA, (a period of duration of aſtronomical origin, and referring to the rate of the *preceſſion of the equinoxes*, but ſtated in the Surya Siddhanta as equal to a thouſand maha yugs, or grand revolutions,) BRAHMA, fatigued with the care of ſo many worlds, fell into a profound ſlumber. During this ſlumber of the creator, the ſtrong dæmon or giant Hayagriva came near him, and ſtole the VEDAS; thoſe four ſacred volumes which originally flowed from the lips of the quadruple deity. With this ineſtimable treaſure he retired into the deep and ſecret boſom of the ocean; and, reſolving never to ſurrender the booty he had ſecured, ſwallowed the ſtolen Vedas. Deprived of the vigilant care of Brahma, the world fell into diſorder; while, no longer guided by the light that emanated from the ſacred books, the human race became, to the laſt degree, corrupt. They were all conſequently deſtroyed in a vaſt deluge, except a certain pious king and his family, which, in

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very ſingular conformity to the relation of Sacred Writ, conſiſted of *ſeven perſons*, who floated upon the waters in a veſſel fabricated according to the expreſs direction of Veeſhnu. For, this pious monarch, one day performing his devotions on the ſhore of the ocean, was forewarned of the approaching calamity by that preſerving deity; and having prepared a veſſel, as commanded, at the appointed time, Veeſhnu appeared again in the form of a fiſh, "blazing like gold, and extending a million of leagues, with one ſtupendous horn," to which the king faſtened the veſſel by a cable compoſed of a vaſt ſerpent, and was thus towed in ſafety along the ſurface of the raging element. When the waters abated, he and his companions were again ſafely landed. Veeſhnu then, re-plunging into the ocean, ſlew, in conflict, the tremendous dæmon Hayagriva, and, rending open the monſter's belly, recovered three of the Vedas, but the fourth, according to the allegory, was digeſted. — The plate annexed diſcovers Veeſhnu riſing from the ocean after vanquiſhing the dæmon, whoſe head, decorated with horns like thoſe of all other princely perſonages in Oriental mythology, is ſeen floating upon the waves below. Veeſhnu appears as if preſenting the ſacred books,

books, which he had thus recovered, to Brahma, who is difcerned above. The third, or Bara Avatar, is not lefs pointedly allufive to the fame awful event. In this incarnation Veefhnu affumes the form of a BOAR, and lifts up upon his huge tufks the ponderous globe, which another dæmon, (an agent ever prefent in Hindoo mythology,) equally gigantic and malignant, after rolling it up like a fcroll, had carried away on his fhoulders, and buried deep in the abyfs.

The meaning of all this is fo obvious as to preclude the neceffity of infifting, in this place, how clearly the affertion of Sir William Jones, as to the three firft Avatars, is demonftrated. I fhall return, therefore, in the next fection, to the farther confideration of that curious doctrine, the Metempfychofis, to which, probably, that of the Avatars originally gave birth, and of the ancient myfteries, in which its ftupendous arcana were unveiled.

SECTION VII.

The Subject of the Metempsychosis, and the ANCIENT MYSTERIES, *resumed. — The former Doctrine the Source of all the horrible Penances which the Hindoos undergo in the Hope of regaining their State of primitive Perfection and Happiness. — The Fall of Man, therefore, a Doctrine necessarily believed in India. — The Nature of the Deity, and his Attributes, unfolded in the Mysteries by physical Symbols, as, for Instance, his creative Energy by the Phallus, or Lingam; his spotless Purity by the* τα θεια Φωτα, *or transparent Orbs of dazzling Brightness; &c. &c. — A still sublimer Theology, however, somewhat resembling the Patriarchal, pervaded the Asiatic World, and particularly flourished in the School of the great Indian Philosopher* VYASA. — *The secret Operations also of Nature herself, when considered distinctly from the Great First Cause, as well in the superior as the subterraneous World,*

World, engrossed a Part of the ancient Mysteries, and the Effects of physical, not less than moral, GOOD *and* EVIL *were successively and powerfully displayed. — The physical Symbol illustrative of the creative Energy, in the End, produced the most unbounded Licentiousness. — The Women of the Idol, a Species of holy Prostitutes, the Result in India; the Bacchic Revels and Debaucheries, the Consequence in Greece, a Nation which borrowed its Theology from* INDIA *through some Medium hitherto inadequately explored. — The several Stages of the Eleusinian Mysteries described from Greek Writers who had been initiated. — Their Analogy to the sacred Festival-Pomps of India, as painted in the Pagodas, and as at this Day celebrated in various Parts of India, adduced as unequivocal Evidence of their having originated in the latter Country.*

FROM the collective evidence exhibited in the preceding pages, the assertion with which I commenced these particular strictures on the Metempsychosis, that the professed design of it was to restore the fallen soul to its

its priſtine ſtate of purity and perfection, is proved beyond contradiction. Thus, an intereſting and aſtoniſhing proſpect unfolds itſelf to our view. Their ſacred writings, we ſee, repreſent the whole univerſe as an ample and auguſt theatre for the probationary exertion of millions of beings, who are ſuppoſed to be ſo many ſpirits degraded from the high honours of angelic diſtinction, and condemned to aſcend, through various gradations of toil and ſuffering, until they ſhall have reached that exalted ſphere of perfection and happineſs, which they enjoyed before their defection. Animated by the deſire of obtaining that final boon, and fired by all the glorious promiſes of the Vedas, the patient Hindoo ſmiles amidſt unutterable miſery, and exults in every dire variety of voluntary torture. In the hope of expiating former crimes by adequate penance, and of regaining ſpeedily that fancied Elyſium, he binds himſelf to the performance of vows which make human nature ſhudder and human reaſon ſtagger. He paſſes whole weeks without the ſmalleſt nouriſhment, and whole years in painful vigils. He wanders about naked as he came from the womb of his parent, and ſuffers, without repining, every viciſſitude of heat and cold, of

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driving ſtorm and beating rain. He ſtands with his arms croſſed above his head, till the ſinews ſhrink and the fleſh withers away. He fixes his eye upon the burning orb of the ſun, till its light be extinguiſhed and its moiſture entirely dried up.* It is impoſſible to read the following minute deſcription of one of theſe devotees in the act of ſtationary penance, as given in the Sacontala, without ſhuddering. Every circumſtance enumerated fills the mind with increaſing horror, and freezes the aſtoniſhed reader to a ſtatue, almoſt as immoveable as the ſuffering penitent. Duſhmanta aſks; "Where is the holy retreat of Maricha?" — Matali *replies*, "A little beyond that grove, where you ſee a pious YOGEE, motionleſs as a pollard, holding his thick buſhy hair, and *fixing his eyes on the ſolar orb*. — Mark, his body *is half-covered with a white ant's edifice*, made of raiſed clay; *the ſkin of a ſnake* ſupplies the place of his ſacerdotal thread, and part of it girds his loins; a number of *knotty plants* encircle and wound his neck, and *ſurrounding birds neſts* almoſt cover

* Every circumſtance enumerated above is particularized and was ſeen by Tavernier in India. See Voyage de Tavernier, tom. iv. p. 118, edit. 1713, with an engraving annexed. I ſhall, in a future page, ſtate ſome ſtill more wonderful, but well-authenticated, relations of Indian mortification.

cover his ſhoulders." Sacontala, p. 87. But I am anticipating a ſubject upon which I muſt hereafter enlarge, when I come to compare the ancient Gymnoſophiſt and the modern Yogee. But to what ſource is this doctrine of ſpirits fallen from their original rectitude, a doctrine which not only infected India but all the Eaſtern world, to be traced? One probable ſource of it has been already ſtated to have originated in the anxiety of the ancient philoſophers, to juſtify the divine attributes, and vindicate the ways of God to man; but the more probable ſource ſeems to have been ſome obſcure and corrupted tradition of the *fallen angels*, handed down through ſucceſſive generations from the great progenitor of the human race, and his immediate deſcendants, with whom celeſtial ſpirits are repreſented as frequently converſing, and to whom they might, as a friendly warning, have imparted the intelligence. If this mode of accounting for the origin of ſo ſingular a doctrine ſhould appear unſatisfactory, much more ſo muſt every other prove; for, after all, one indubitable fact muſt ſtill be admitted in this kind of diſcuſſion, viz. that what belongs to *paſt* or *future* ſcenes of exiſtence can only be

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known to mankind through the MEDIUM OF REVELATION.

No precepts ſo ſevere as theſe were indeed taught by the divines and philoſophers of Egypt and Greece. Neither in the myſtic cells of the former, nor in the Eleuſinian ſanctuaries of the latter, was the doctrine of the Metempſychoſis carried to ſuch an extreme point of ſpeculative inveſtigation as in the ſacred caverns of India; but that the precepts taught, and the rites celebrated, in both countries, were in a ſtriking degree ſimilar, will be more clearly manifeſted by the ſucceeding enumeration of particular parallel circumſtances that diſtinguiſhed them. Immerſed in the errors of polytheiſm as was the great body of the Egyptian nation, it has yet been inconteſtably proved,* by the immortal Cudworth, that the hierophant, or arch-prieſt, in the ſecret rites of their religion, taught the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead; but this noble ſentiment, though they had the *magnanimity* to conceive, they wanted the *generoſity* to impart to the deluded populace; for, it was thought dangerous, both to the church and the ſtate, to ſhake the foundations of the reigning ſuperſtition.

* See Cudworth's Intellectual Syſtem, chap. v. ſect. 18.

perſtition. But, to thoſe ſpeculative and philoſophic minds, that poſſeſſed ſufficient firmneſs to bear the communication of ſo lofty and important a truth, the whole ſcene of vulgar deluſion was laid bare, and the myſtic veil, that obſcured the "Great Firſt Cauſe" from the view of his creatures, was rent aſunder; while the *initiated* were taught, that Jupiter, Vulcan, Mercury, and the reſt of the deities, who were the object of popular devotion, were nothing more than departed human beings, deified by grateful poſterity for the virtues they had practiſed during life and the benefits they had conferred upon mankind.

Mr. Haſtings, one of the moſt early and liberal patrons of Sanſcreet literature in India, in a letter to Nathaniel Smith, Eſq. one of its moſt zealous encouragers in England, has remarked how accurately many of the leading principles of the pure unadulterated doctrines of Brahma correſpond with thoſe of the Chriſtian ſyſtem.* In the Geeta, indeed, ſome paſſages, ſurpriſingly conſonant, occur, concerning the ſublime nature and attributes

* See Mr. Haſtings's recommendatory-letter to N. Smith, Eſq. at that time chairman of the Eaſt-India Company, and prefixed to the GEETA.

tributes of God as well as concerning the properties and functions of the ſoul. Thus, where the Deity, in the form of Creeſhna, addreſſes Arjun: "I am the Creator of all things, and all things proceed from me." "I am the beginning, the middle, and the end, of all things: I am time; I am all-graſping death, and I am the reſurrection; I am the myſtic figure OM! I am generation and diſſolution!" Arjun, in pious ecſtaſy, exclaims: "Reverence! reverence! be unto thee a thouſand times repeated! Again and again reverence! O thou, who art all in all! infinite in thy power and thy glory! Thou art the Father of all things animate and inanimate! there is none like unto thee!" P. 95. And again, where Creeſhna deſcribes the nature of the ſoul:—"The ſoul is not a thing of which a man may ſay it hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter; for, it is a thing without birth, it is incorruptible, eternal, inexhauſtible! the weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away; for, it is indiviſible, inconſumable, unalterable!" P. 37. Sir William Jones has been at the pains of tranſlating four ſtanzas of the Bhagavat, which, he ſays, are ſcrupulouſly literal, and

which I ſhall take the liberty of tranſcribing, ſince they afford not only a ſtriking proof of the ſublime notions which the Hindoos entertain concerning the Deity, but exhibit a curious ſpecimen of the ſtyle in which their ſacred books are written. The words, he obſerves, are believed by the Hindoos to have been pronounced to Brahma by the Supreme Being himſelf.

"Even I was even at the firſt, not any other thing; that which exiſts, unperceived, ſupreme; afterwards, I AM THAT WHICH IS, and he WHO MUST REMAIN am I.

"Except the FIRST CAUSE, whatever may appear or may not appear in the mind, know that to be the mind's MAYA, (or *deluſion,)* as light, as darkneſs.

"As the great elements are in various beings, entering yet not entering; (that is, pervading, not deſtroying;) thus am I in them, yet not in them.

"Even thus far may inquiry be made by him, who ſeeks to know the principle of mind, in union and ſeparation, which muſt be EVERY WHERE ALWAYS."

Wild and obſcure, Sir William obſerves, as theſe ancient verſes muſt appear in a naked verbal tranſlation, it will be thought, by many, that

that the poetry of Greece and Italy affords no conceptions more awfully magnificent.* The firſt ſtanza brings irreſiſtably to our recollection that ſublime verſe of the Apocalypſe; "I am ALPHA and OMEGA, the Beginning and the Ending, ſaith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the ALMIGHTY." I earneſtly intreat the candid reader to take notice, that when, in various parts of this treatiſe, I have ſpoken of the pure and ſublime theology of Brahma, I have conſtantly alluded to theſe and ſimilar original paſſages in their moſt ſacred books, and not to thoſe wild ſchemes of theology, engrafted upon it by commenting Brahmins, nor the complex and degrading ſyſtem of devotion at preſent prevailing in Hindoſtan. Aſtoniſhed at the ſtriking ſimilarity that ſubſiſts between the religious principles of the Hindoos and thoſe of the Chriſtian faith, the learned Hyde† boldly pronounced, that BRAHMA muſt have been the patriarch ABRAHAM. Poſtellus,‡ however, had long before aſſerted the ſame thing, with this additional circumſtance, that the tribe of Brahmins were the deſcendants of

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* Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 246.

† Hyde, Hiſt. Relig. vet. Perſ. p. 31.

‡ Abraham Poſtellus in Commentario ad Jezirah.

that patriarch by his wife Keturah, and were ſo called, *quaſi Abrahmanes.* He might, by parity of reaſoning, have derived the name of the ſecond great Indian, or Kattri, tribe from Keturah, from which it is not very diſſimilar; but, in this caſe, unfortunately the ſame argument would hold good as that before-urged againſt the probability that Zoroaſter was of Judaic extraction — the total ſilence of the Vedas in regard to circumciſion. The Arabs, who are deſcended from Abraham by Iſhmael, and are likewiſe jealous of the invaded honours of the great patriarch their progenitor, contend that Brahma and Abraham are the ſame, and Herbelot* informs us, that a Brahmin, named Behergir, converted to Mahommediſm, communicated to thoſe Arabs the book called L'Ambertkend, which he calls, Livre qui contient tous les Dogmes de la Religion des Indiens, but of which book I have not been able to gain any tidings, and the deſcription ſeems alone applicable to the Vedas. A very intereſting, and, if true, a very important, piece

* See Herbelot Biblioth. Orient. under the article *Behergir,* in which a miſtake of this great Orientaliſt ſhould be corrected, ſince he calls him, Un Brahman de la ſecte, ou de l'ordre, de ceux que l'on appelle Gioghis (Yogees). Now the Yogees are not Brahmins, but candidates for that order. My edition of Herbelot is that of Maeſtricht, 1776.

piece of hiſtorical information, is related in the "Account of the Eaſt-Indies," by Mr. Hamilton, ſince it appears to account for a very large portion of thoſe ten diſperſed tribes, whoſe place of reſidence, ever ſince the period of their captivity, has ſo long been the object of curious inveſtigation among the learned. A colony of Jews, to the amount of no leſs than eighty thouſand families, is aſſerted by that author, on the authority of the Dutch records at Cranganore, on the coaſt of Malabar, to have anciently flouriſhed, in the kingdom of Cochin, under elders and judges of their own election. Their traditional hiſtory, which they anxiouſly preſerve on copper-plates, deeply engraved in Hebrew characters, depoſited in the ſanctuary of the ſynagogue, relates, that their anceſtors came thither before the downfal of the Babylonian empire; and that hiſtory deſcends, in a regular ſeries of events, from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the preſent time. It announces them to be of the tribe of Manaſſes, and deſcribes their tedious journey of three years from Babylon to the coaſt of Malabar, the various ſufferings which this miſerable and exiled race, amounting to twenty thouſand families, endured in their progreſs thither, the hoſpitable reception

they met with from the natives, their thriving commerce, their increaſing population, the period of their higheſt power and aggrandization, and that of their gradual decline, down to their preſent number, of about four thouſand families only. A ſimilar colony, if we may believe the Jeſuits, eſtabliſhed themſelves in China.

Although I thought it incumbent upon me to mention theſe circumſtances, yet I am cautious of urging any argument that may ſeem to ariſe from this evidence of the ancient intercourſe which the Indians enjoyed with the choſen people of God, for, polytheiſm has ever flouriſhed with more vigour in the Peninſula than on the continent of India. From this ſource, then, I dare not aſſert, that the Hindoos derived their purer theological tenets, ſince thoſe tenets appear to me to be of ſuperior antiquity. It is only from NOAH himſelf, their famed MENU, the great inſpired prophet of the ante-diluvian race of mortals, and the auguſt father of the preſent, or elſe from one or other of the ſons of the righteous SHEM, who might make this happy region their early abode, that this unfathomable antiquity of the Brahmin ſcriptures allows me to derive the grand *principia* of their *almoſt Chriſtian* theology;

logy; that auguſt fabric, of which we obſerve the UNITY OF GOD forms the central pillar. This ſublime doctrine OF AN INVISIBLE, ETERNAL, AND SELF-EXISTENT, GOD, WHOM ALL SYMBOLICAL REPRESENTATION MUST DEGRADE, has ever been upheld by thoſe among them who have dared to divulge a dogma kept profoundly ſecret from the vulgar, whoſe ſenſual conceptions, they imagined, were only to be actuated upon, and whoſe ſtubborn minds were only to be kept in ſacred ſubjection to an arbitrary prieſthood, by external objects, and who, conſequently, were permitted to plunge by degrees into the loweſt abyſs of groſs and multifarious idolatry. They were firſt ſuffered to adore the attributes of God under repreſentative figures, decorated with emblematical ornaments; they were next allowed to pay divine honours to rajahs, in whom the Deity had condeſcended to become incarnate, and who were, therefore, ſuppoſed to be inveſted with a portion of his divinity; for, the doctrine of the AVATARS, or deſcents of Deity in the form of man, undoubtedly, contributed to keep alive, if it did not originally give birth to, the belief of the Metempſychoſis, as well as to cheriſh the errors of idol-worſhip in India. The ſymbol in time came to be adored

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inſtead of the Original, the rajah was honoured in the place of his Creator. The more artful and luxurious Brahmin, who, under the garb of auſterity and ſanctity, fattened upon the ſpoils of ſuperſtition, beheld and exulted in the ſucceſs of his project; he crowded the ſculptured wall of the ſacred cavern with ſymbolical figures and ſtatues of deified rajahs; he bade the people approach them with holy reverence, and he excited their wonder and reſpect by recounting to them the heroic feats they had performed during the period of their ſojourning with mortals. But this alone was not ſufficient; terror has a more laſting influence than admiration upon the human mind. With the ſymbolic figures of the mercy and goodneſs of God were blended thoſe of his juſtice and his wrath. As the former were ſculptured with ſmiling aſpects, and were decorated with the enſigns of peace and protection, ſo were the latter pourtrayed with horrible diſtorted viſages, and arrayed with every dreadful ſymbol that could alarm and terrify the beholder. Theſe figures, converted into dæmons, under the notion of being the avenging miniſters of omnipotent juſtice, were moſt to the purpoſe of the prieſt. He recited their number, he magnified their enormous power,

and he awakened the agonizing terrors of his audience by impreffing them with ideas of their conftant and immediate interference in human affairs. To the gazing and infatuated multitude, who thronged the porches and the body of the auguft temple, he exclaimed: BEHOLD YOUR GODS! and the imagination was acted upon in the fame manner as at this moment, in the modern pagodas, by defcriptive paintings, by expreffive fymbols, and myfterious ceremonies and exhibitions. But, in every fucceffive age of the Indian empire, from its foundation to the prefent time, there have not been wanting Brahmins who fpurned at the interefted practices of their brethren, and who oppofed, as far as they dared, the prevailing torrent of idolatry that fo widely overfpread the land. Among thefe, the great VYASA, the Plato of India, holds the moft diftinguifhed rank; for, his defign in writing the Geeta, as Mr. Wilkins has told us in his elegant preface, feems to have been, " to undermine certain tenets inculcated in the Vedas, by fetting up the doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead in oppofition to idolatrous facrifices and the worfhip of images; for, although the author dared not make a direct attack, either upon the prevailing prejudices of the people or the

divine

divine authority of those ancient scriptures, yet, by offering *eternal* happiness to such as worship BRAHME, the Almighty, whilst he declares the reward of such as follow other gods should be but a temporary reward in an inferior heaven, for a period measured by the extent of their virtues, his intention, doubtless, was to bring about the downfal of polytheism.*

Similar to this conduct was that of the hierophant in the mystic cells of Egypt. The immortal Cudworth † has indeed ably vindicated the Egyptian priests from the charge of atheism; but still the people were kept in profound ignorance of that great truth, the UNITY OF GOD, which was thought dangerous to reveal, lest a contempt of the established system and the downfal of the popular superstition should be the fatal consequence. They permitted therefore the multitude to remain plunged as they were in the depth of a gross and complicated idolatry; but, for those philosophic few who could bear the light of truth, without being confounded by the blaze, they removed the mysterious veil, and

* Preface to the Geeta, p. 24.

† See Cudworth's Intellectual System, chap. iv. p. 4, sect. 18.

and displayed to them the Deity in the radiant glory of his UNITY. From the vulgar eye, however, these doctrines were kept inviolably sacred, and wrapt in the veil of impenetrable mystery. They were denominated MYSTERIES, as well because the initiated were enjoined to keep the doctrines inculcated and the rites practised in the secret cell sacred from the profane as because the former were constantly taught and the latter celebrated εν σκοτω και νυκτι, in the bosom of darkness and in the dead silence of the night. This profound darkness, this midnight silence, they imagined, threw a kind of sacred horror over their rites, and the priests, both of Egypt and Athens, thought these a securer defence against intrusion than either the secret depths of those subterraneous caverns in which they were originally celebrated, or the lofty walls that, in succeeding ages, encircled the superb temple of Ceres at Eleusis. In the extensive review which Warburton has taken of this subject, after mentioning the division of the Eleusinian mysteries into the GREATER and the LESS, after stating that in the LESS was inculcated the general belief of a Providence and of a future state, and that they were only preparatory to the GREATER, that celebrated investigator of

those myſteries thus proceeds: "But there was one inſuperable obſtacle in paganiſm to a life of purity and holineſs, which was the vicious examples of their gods. *Ego, homuncio, hoc non facerem?* was the abſolving formulary, whenever a man had determined to give a looſe to his irregular appetites. There was a neceſſity therefore of remedying this evil, which could only be done by ſtriking at the root of it; ſo that, ſuch of the initiated as were judged capable were made acquainted with the whole deluſion. The myſtagogue taught them, that Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Mars, and the whole rabble of licentious deities, were indeed only DEAD MORTALS, ſubject in life to the ſame paſſions and vices with themſelves; but, having been, in ſeveral inſtances, benefactors to mankind, grateful poſterity had deified them; and, with their virtues, had indiſcreetly canonized their vices. The fabulous gods being thus routed, the SUPREME CAUSE of all things, of courſe, took their place: him they were taught to conſider as the Creator of the univerſe, who pervaded all things by his virtue, and governed all things by his providence. From this time, the initiated had the title of Ἐποπτης, or, *one that ſees things as they are, without diſguiſe,*

guiſe, whereas before he was called Μυϛης, which has a contrary ſignification."* The reader will recollect, that there has been deſcribed, in the cavern of Elephanta, an interior receſs, or ſacellum, which, while the exterior temple was crowded with mythologic ſculptures, poſſeſſed no ornament whatſoever, except one ſolitary but degrading emblem of the great Creator. However degrading the ſymbol, it was certainly intended to ſhadow out the ONE SUPREME DEITY and FATHER OF ALL. The exterior temple was, therefore, allotted for the performance of the blind and proſtrate devotions of the multitude; and at the ſame time, it muſt be owned, that many of the divinities, whoſe images are graven on thoſe walls, were as remarkable for licentiouſneſs, in the mythologic hiſtories of the Hindoos, as ever were thoſe of the Egyptians and Greeks in their fabulous annals. The external temple was alſo appropriated, like the body of the myſtic temples of Egypt, to the initiation of the younger Brahmins into the leſſer myſteries of the Hindoo religion and ſciences, as well as to the celebration of the ſplendid rites of the former and the diſplay of the wonderful arcana of the latter. The elder

* Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 148.

elder and more experienced votaries, the *Indian Epoptai*, were admitted into the internal ſanctuary, and all the errors of vulgar polytheiſm, as in the greater myſteries of Egypt and Eleuſis, were laid bare to their view. The DEITY broke forth in all the majeſty of UNITY upon them, and the riſing SUN of TRUTH diſſipated the clouds of deception and allegory.

However defective and inconcluſive may be thought the arguments brought by Warburton in ſupport of the general hypotheſis, which he laboured to eſtabliſh in the Divine Legation, and however particularly erroneous and fanciful may appear his ſtrictures upon the ſixth Æneid of Virgil,* in elucidation of the Eleuſinian myſteries, yet, it muſt be owned, that he has diſplayed in that work a profundity of learning, and a ſplendour of genius, that ſcarcely ever before concentrated their rays to illumine one publication. Proud to follow ſo exalted a guide, upon ground not altogether treacherous, I ſhall now proceed to ſtate ſome farther particulars, which he has enumerated in relation to the preſent ſubject, and examine how far they may be compatible with

* See a much more judicious account of that Æneid by Dr. Beattie in the Philoſoph. Tranſact. Edinburgh, vol. ii. part ii. p. 33.

with the religious rites and ſciences of India. In the firſt place, in confirmation of what has been juſt now advanced, may be urged a paſſage, quoted by the biſhop from Clemens, that, with the principles of theology taught in the myſteries, were actually blended thoſe that relate to natural hiſtory and philoſophy; ſince that author expreſsly ſays, that the doctrines, delivered in the greater myſteries, treated concerning the univerſe, adding, "Here ends all inſtruction; things are ſeen as they are; and nature, and the things of nature, are given to be comprehended." The various mathematical ſymbols, and other philoſophical apparatus, that ornamented the Mithratic caves of the Brahmins, added to what we have already ſtated concerning their extenſive aſtronomical inveſtigations, and the doctrines relative to the mundane ſyſtem, which Ammianus Marcellinus affirms they imparted to the Perſian legiſlator, will be conſidered, I preſume, as one ſtrong proof of this aſſertion. But a ſtill more deciſive proof ſeems to ariſe from another paſſage, cited from Themiſtius, which deſcribes the entrance of the initiated "into a region all over illuminated, and ſhining with a divine ſplendour," where the Αυτοπτον Αγαλμα, or ſelf-conſpicuous image, the myſtic

emblem of the great vivifying principle of nature, diffuſed around an inconceivable ſplendour. In the ſecond place, and what is more remarkably to our preſent purpoſe, may be adduced the atteſtation inſerted from Proclus; that, in the celebration of the myſteries, the initiated met many things, of multiform ſhapes and ſpecies, that prefigured the firſt GENERATION of the gods. The principal ſymbol alluded to in this place will be obvious to the reader, ſince *by the gods* are unqueſtionably meant the firſt race of deified mortals. The Sun, however, and elementary Fire are emblems of the Deity, ſo frequently mentioned in ancient Sanſcreet writings, and withal emblems ſo much more noble than that in queſtion, that I cannot avoid retaining my *firſt* opinion on the ſubject; that they were the moſt early ſymbols of Deity exhibited in theſe receſſes, and that the one intimated is only a baſe ſubſtitution, derived from the degenerate devotion eſtabliſhed in Egypt by Ham. Indeed, the paſſage cited before ſeems inconteſtably to prove this point. To this may be added another, quoted from the ſcholiaſt, in the Oracles of Zoroaſter, in which it is declared, that he, who is fully initiated, beholds τα θεια φωτα, or the DIVINE LIGHTS. And ſurely THE

REFULGENT

REFULGENT ORB OF DAY, ſurely that FIRE, which the Hermetic philoſophers, in their enthuſiaſtic ſtrain, denominate *the radiant child of the ſun*, are far more expreſſive, as they doubtleſs are more decent, emblems of the great generative and invigorating faculty of nature than that wretched device of a depraved mind. We have, however, ſeen the application of this ſymbol in the rites of Iſis; and, if Tertullian may be credited, the very ſame indecent emblem was adored at Eleuſis, and excited both the pointed ridicule and vehement reproaches of the fathers of the church. In fact, there can be but little doubt, and therefore it ought candidly to be allowed, that, originally, the pagan world, under the maſculine ſymbol, worſhipped, or pretended to worſhip, as the Hindoos at this day avow, the firſt creative energy, and, under the feminine ſymbol, (for both ſymbols were adored in that proſtituted ſyſtem of religion,) was typified Ceres, the earth, the Dea Multimamma, the prolific parent of all things. Thoſe, however, who thus emblematically repreſented the all-bounteous mother, the goddeſs of fertility, the beſtower of fruits and grain, ought to have learned better, from a particular circumſtance in the fabulous

hiſtory of Ceres; for, when, in gratitude to the father of Triptolemus, ſhe undertook the education of that youth, to haſten his maturity, ſhe fed him in the day-time with divine milk, and by night ſhe covered him all over with GENIAL FIRE. But a little reflection will ſoon convince us, that, as perſons of either ſex were promiſcuouſly allowed to be initiated, when the original phyſical cauſe by degrees came to be forgotten, what a general diſſipation, what a boundleſs immorality, would be promoted by ſo ſcandalous an exhibition! The ſeaſon of nocturnal gloom, in which thoſe myſteries were performed, and the inviolable ſecrecy which accompanied the celebration of them, added to the inviting ſolitude of the ſcene, conſpired at once to break down all the barriers of modeſty, to overturn all the fortitude of manly virtue, and to rend the veil of modeſty from the bluſhing face of virgin innocence. At length, licentious paſſion trampled upon the moſt ſacred obſtacles which law and religion united to raiſe againſt it. The Bacchanal, frantic with midnight intemperance, polluted the ſecret ſanctuary, and Proſtitution ſat THRONED upon the very altars of the gods. It is not my intention to ſtain theſe pages with a repetition of the

enormous

enormous and aggravated impieties committed during the celebration of the myſteries of Bacchus at Rome, and ſo circumſtantially recorded by the hiſtorian Livy,* nor the multiform impurities ſuppoſed to have been perpetrated in thoſe of the BONA DEA; but the obſcene abominations connived at in India, and even promoted by the more corrupt Brahmins, (I mean with reſpect to that ill-fated and proſtituted race, denominated the WOMEN OF THE IDOL,) are too cloſely connected with the preſent unpleaſing ſubject to be paſſed over in total ſilence. What I ſhall offer, on this curious ſubject, will be taken from two authentic books, written at very different periods, and therefore fully deciſive as to the general prevalence of the inſtitution from age to age; the Anciennes Rélations, and Les Voyages de M. Tavernier: the former written in the 9th, the latter in the 17th, century.

Incited unqueſtionably by the hieroglyphic emblem of vice, ſo conſpicuouſly elevated and ſo ſtrikingly painted in the temples of MAHADEO, the prieſts of that deity induſtriouſly ſelected the moſt beautiful females that could be found, and, in their tendereſt years, with great pomp and ſolemnity, conſecrated them

 (as

* See Livii Hiſt. lib. 39.

(as it is impioufly called) to the fervice of the prefiding divinity of the pagoda. They were trained up in every art to delude and to delight; and, to the fafcination of external beauty, their artful betrayers added the attractions arifing from mental accomplifhments. Thus was an invariable rule of the Hindoos, *that women have no concern with literature*, difpenfed with upon this infamous occafion. The moment thefe haplefs victims reached maturity, they fell victims* to the luft of the Brahmins. They were early taught to practife the moft alluring blandifhments, to roll the expreffive eye of wanton pleafure, and to invite to criminal indulgence by ftealing upon the beholder the tender look of voluptuous languifhing. They were inftructed to mould their elegant and airy forms into the moft enticing attitudes and the moft lafcivious geftures, while the rapid and graceful motion of their feet, adorned with golden bells and glittering with jewels, kept unifon with the exquifite melody of their voices. Every pagoda has a band of thefe young fyrens, whofe bufinefs, on great feftivals, is to dance in public before the idol, to fing hymns in his honour, and in private to enrich the treafury of that pagoda with the wages of proftitution.

Theſe women are not, however, regarded in a diſhonourable light; they are conſidered as *wedded to the idol*, and they partake of the veneration paid to him. They are forbidden ever to deſert the pagoda where they are educated, and are never permitted to marry; but the offspring, if any, of their criminal embraces, are conſidered as ſacred to the idol: the boys are taught to play on the ſacred inſtruments uſed at the feſtivals, and the daughters are devoted to the abandoned occupations of their mothers. The reader has, doubtleſs, heard and read frequently of the degeneracy and venality of PRIESTS, and we know, from Herodotus, what ſcandalous proſtitutions were anciently *ſuffered** in honour of Mylitta; but a ſyſtem of corruption, ſo ſyſtematical, ſo deliberate, and ſo nefarious, and that profeſſedly carried on in the name and for the advantage of religion, ſtands perhaps unrivalled in the hiſtory of the world and the annals of infamy. It was by degrees that the Eleuſinian worſhip arrived at the point of enormity above-recited,

and

* I ſay *ſuffered*, becauſe it does not appear that the proſtitutes, in the temple of this Aſſyrian Venus, were trained by the prieſts to ruin: the whole account, however, is in other reſpects too ſimilar. I do not chooſe to inſert the ſcandalous particulars, but the reader may find them in Herodotus, lib. i. p. 62.

and the obſcenities, finally prevalent, were equally regretted and diſclaimed by the inſtitutors; but, in India, we ſee an avowed plan of ſhameleſs ſeduction and debauchery; the prieſt himſelf converted into a baſe procurer, and the pagoda into a public brothel. The devout Mahomedan traveller, whoſe journey to India, in the ninth century, has been publiſhed by M. Renaudot, and from which account this deſcription is partly taken, concludes the article by a ſolemn thankſgiving to the Almighty, that *he* and *his* nation were delivered from the errors of infidelity, and were unſtained by the enormities of ſo criminal a devotion!*

Nothing can be conceived more ſolemn than the rites of initiation into the greater myſteries, as deſcribed by Apuleius and Dion Chryſoſtome, who had both gone through the awful ceremony: nothing more tremendous and appalling than the ſcenery exhibited before the eyes of the terrified *aſpirant*. After entering the grand veſtibule of the myſtic ſhrine, he was led by the hierophant, amidſt ſurrounding darkneſs and incumbent horrors, through

* See Anciennes Rélations, p. 88, and Voyage de Tavernier, livre i. chap. v. beginning at 'Cette pagode eſt remplie de quantité de nudités,' &c.

through all thoſe extended ailes, winding avenues, and gloomy adyta, mentioned above as equally belonging to the myſtic temples of Egypt, Eleuſis, and India. I have aſſerted before, that the Metempſychoſis was one of the leading *principia* taught in thoſe temples, and this firſt ſtage was intended to repreſent the toilſome wanderings of the benighted ſoul through the mazes of vice and error before initiation; or, in the words of an ancient writer quoted by Warburton from Stobæus: "It was a rude and fearful march through night and darkneſs."* Preſently the ground began to rock beneath his feet, the whole temple trembled, and ſtrange and dreadful voices were heard through the midnight ſilence. To theſe ſucceeded other louder and more terrific noiſes, reſembling thunder; while quick and vivid flaſhes of lightning darted through the cavern, diſplaying to his view many ghaſtly ſights and hideous ſpectres, emblematical of the various vices, diſeaſes, infirmities, and calamities, incident in that ſtate of terreſtrial bondage from which his ſtruggling ſoul was now going to emerge, as well as of the horrors and penal torments of the guilty in a future ſtate. At this period, all the pageants of vulgar idolatry, all

* See Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 235.

all the train of gods, ſupernal and infernal, paſſed in awful ſucceſſion before him, and a hymn, called the *Theology of Idols*, recounting the genealogy and functions of each, was ſung: afterwards, the whole fabulous detail was ſolemnly recanted by the myſtagogue; a divine hymn in honour of ETERNAL AND IMMUTABLE TRUTH was chanted, and the profounder myſteries commenced. "And now arrived on the verge of *death* and *initiation*, every thing wears a dreadful aſpect; it is all horror, trembling, and aſtoniſhment." An icy chillineſs ſeizes his limbs; a copious dew, like the damp of real death, bathes his temples; he ſtaggers, and his faculties begin to fail; when the ſcene is of a ſudden changed, and the doors of the interior and ſplendidly-illumined temple are thrown wide open. A "miraculous and divine light diſcloſes itſelf: and ſhining plains and flowery meadows open on all hands before him." *Acceſſi confinium mortis*, ſays Apuleius,* *et calcato Proſerpinæ limine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi; nocte medio vidi* SOLEM *candido coruſcantem lumine:*— Arrived at the bourn of mortality, after having trod the gloomy threſhold of Proſerpine,

* Apuleii Metamorphoſis, lib. ii. v. i. p. 273. Edit. noviſſima, ad optimas editiones collata, ſtudiis Societatis Bipontinæ, 1788.

pine, I paſſed rapidly through all the ſurrounding elements; and, at deep midnight, beheld the ſun ſhining in meridian ſplendour. The clouds of mental error and the ſhades of real darkneſs being now alike diſſipated, both the ſoul and the body of the initiated experienced a delightful viciſſitude; and, while the latter, purified with luſtrations, bounded in a blaze of glory, the former diſſolved in a tide of overwhelming tranſport. Thoſe few authors of the ancient world, who have written on this ſubject, and who have dared to unfold to poſterity the awful and deep ſecrets into which they were initiated, ſpeak of them exactly as the Brahmins do of the divine raptures of *abſorption* in the Deity, or the modern ſect of Swedenborgh of thoſe of their imagined Elyſium. At that period of virtuous and triumphant exultation, according to the divine Plato, (the VYASA of Greece,) "they ſaw celeſtial beauty in all the dazzling radiance of its perfection, when, joining with the glorified chorus, they were admitted to the *μακαρίαν ὄψιν*, or *beatific viſion*, and were initiated into the moſt bleſſed of all myſteries."*

I ſhall

* Καλλος δε τοτε εν ιδειν λαμπρον, &c. Platonis Phæd. p. 1224. Ficini edit. Francfort, 1602.

I ſhall conclude this prolonged account of the ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES with mentioning a few particulars, which, added to what has been already ſaid, will, I conceive, leave little doubt remaining in the mind of the reader concerning the real and original country in which they were firſt inſtituted; unleſs indeed he ſhould be inclined to believe ſo improbable a circumſtance, as that the haughty and ſelf-ſufficient Brahmin might have borrowed, from the remote region of Greece, the moſt ſacred and indiſpenſable rituals of his religion. Of thoſe various, tedious, and complex, ceremonies, as well as of the exact and ſevere diſcipline which the Brahmin is compelled to toil through in the ſeveral ſtages of the CHAR ASHERUM, or *four Hindoo degrees*, I ſhall treat amply in a future chapter; but it will be peculiarly illuſtrative of the preſent ſubject, to deſcribe, in this place, the ablutions neceſſary to be performed by the BRAHMACHAREE, or Brahmin of the firſt degree. They are thus, *verbatim et literatim*, related in the Ayeen Akbery.* "The Brahmin bathes every morning before ſun-riſe. He begins his ablution with taking up in his right hand a little water, and ſays, Pardon my offences!

After

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 217.

After this, he throws away the water; then he rubs himſelf all over with earth; and, if he be in a river, dives three times, or elſe he throws water thrice over his body, and rubs himſelf with his hands. Next, he repeats the name of GOD, and afterwards thrice takes up in his right hand a little water, which he ſips, and repeats certain prayers, during all which time he ſprinkles water upon his head. Then, with his fore-finger and thumb, he ſtops his noſtrils, and, bowing down his face to the ſurface of the water, repeats another prayer, and then plunges again, or throws water over himſelf thrice. He then ſprinkles *ſeven* times his forehead, breaſt, and ſhoulders: after this, joining his open hands, he fills them *eight* times with water, and throws it towards the ſun, reciting a particular prayer. He then ſips the water, and finally repeats the PARAYENAM." This, adds Abul Fazil, they call the ablution; and a very ample ablution the reader will, doubtleſs, eſteem it. Let us now inquire what was the introductory rite of initiation practiſed at Eleuſis. The very firſt and moſt important ceremony in the leſſer myſteries was the purification of the body BY WATER, intended to inculcate the neceſſity of a ſimiliar purification of the ſoul from the im-

pure adhesions of vicious passions and propensities; and, it is remarkable, that the officer assisting upon that solemn occasion was called Υδρανος, from υδωρ, *water*. The same ceremony of ablution was repeated on the initiation into the greater mysteries; for, according to Meursius, whose account I do not possess, but whom Archbishop Potter,* in his extended account of this festival, has sedulously followed, at the very entrance of the grand mystic temple the aspirant washed his hands in consecrated water: and Apuleius, who had been initiated, expressly says,† Septies *submerso fluctibus capite, quod eum numerum principivè religione aptissimum divinus ille Pythagoras prodidit.* The very mention of Pythagoras, who is recorded in the Hindoo annals ‡ to have visited India by this author, and his specifying the particular number *seven*, are two of the strongest testimonies

* See Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 390, edit. oct.

† Apuleii Metamorph. vol. i. p. 254, edit. Bipont. 1788.

‡ Mr. Holwell acquaints us, I presume from good authority, that both the Persian legislator and the Grecian philosopher made a long residence with the Brahmins, north-west of the Ganges, and that the names of Zardhurst and Pythagore are still remembered "as travellers in search of wisdom."

monies that can be adduced in proof of the truth of the preceding remark.

The reader will not, perhaps, be difpleafed to paufe with me for one moment; and, while he confiders the number and variety of thefe ablutions, but efpecially the endlefs repetition of thofe of the Brahmin, he will afk, for what important caufe was this tedious round of ablutions prefcribed him? He will demand, in memorial of WHAT GRAND EVENT were thefe eternal bathings in rivers and tanks ordained? If it fhould be anfwered, they were intended as a memento of internal purity, and an incitement to preferve unfpotted virtue amidft abounding vice; or, if they fhould be affirmed to have fprung from a laudable intention in the great legiflator to promote external health and vigour of conftitution in a dangerous and enervating climate; he will probably allow, in the inftitution, much folid wifdom and piety; and, in the practice, much fubftantial benefit. But I will venture to affirm, that, independently of thofe momentous confiderations, two other events, the moft interefting and the moft important in the annals of mankind, are meant to be fhadowed out, and the memory of them, by thefe rites, indelibly impreffed and kept alive in the breaft of the de-

votee:

votee: I mean, the CREATION of the WORLD, when Brahma or the ſpirit of God floated, in his lotos-bed, upon the waters of the Chaos; and the deſtruction of that world by a GENERAL DELUGE. This latter aſſertion will, undoubtedly, provoke a ſarcaſtic ſmile, at my ignorance, from thoſe who have read, in the preface to the code of Hindoo laws, that the Brahmins deny that "the deluge ever took place in Hindoſtan;" an aſſertion, which Mr. Halhed, in a future edition, will probably cancel from his otherwiſe valuable and authentic page. Having, however, made this ſubject, as well as the not leſs involved one of their wild chronology, objects of particular and of laborious inveſtigation, I have the happineſs to acquaint the reader, that a conſiderable part of the firſt volume of the Hiſtory of Hindoſtan is devoted to the elucidation of thoſe points. I may take the liberty to add, without indulging an improper vanity, that, though it be far from wanting that additional ſupport, the grand fabric of the Moſaic theology, ſo far from being ſhaken to its foundations by thoſe Indian chimæras, that have ſo widely gone forth into the world and have been propagated with ſuch indecent zeal by ſome writers of a ſceptical claſs, will, in the

the reſult of the inveſtigation, obtain a new column of adamant to uphold and ado n t. In fact, every freſh attack upon that majeſtic fabric tends only the more to prove its IMPREGNABLE SOLIDITY, and cover its enemies with FRESH CONFUSION. Upon the preſent ſubject, I ought not to omit doing juſtice to one of the greateſt ſcholars and the moſt ingenious men of the preſent age, who has ſuggeſted the NOVEL, the PIOUS, and the FORCIBLE, remark, that the real foundation of all the myſteries celebrated in every country, from the period of their ſuppoſed commencement in Egypt to that of their final extinction at Rome in the prefecture of Gracchus, was a pious and grateful attempt of the firſt poſt-diluvian ages to commemorate the miraculous eſcape, under Divine Providence, of their immediate anceſtors from the jaws of a watery grave, and their preſervation in the ark, fabricated by the direction of God. I ſhall take the liberty of tranſcribing a paſſage or two, from the ſecond volume of the Analyſis of Ancient Mythology, in illuſtration of the author's hypotheſis. After aſſerting, that all the myſterious rites of the Gentile world appear to have been memorials of the deluge and of the events which immediately ſucceeded,

Mr. Bryant adds, "Thoſe myſteries, for the moſt part, conſiſted of a melancholy proceſs; and were celebrated, by night, with torches, in commemoration of the ſtate of darkneſs in which the great patriarch and his family had been involved."* In another place he takes notice, that "there was ſcarcely any circumſtance, however minute, mentioned by Moſes concerning the ARK and NOAH, but what was recorded in the family of Ham. It is ſaid of the patriarch, that he was a man of the earth, and ſkilled in planting and ſowing, and every ſpecies of agriculture. When he conſtructed the ark, he made a window in it; through which, after a ſeaſon, he looked forth and ſaw the ruins of the former world. He made alſo a DOOR in the ark; which was a circumſtance continually commemorated by the Gentile writers. The entrance, through it, they eſteemed a paſſage to death and darkneſs; but the egreſs from it was repreſented as a return to life. And, as the reſidence in the ark was an intermediate ſtate between a loſt world and a world renewed, this was conſtantly alluded to in their ſymbolical repreſentations."† The reader will obſerve that the ingenious

* See Bryant's Analyſis, vol. ii. p. 331, 332, 333.

† Bryant's Analyſis, vol. ii. p. 237.

ingenious analyſt, throughout his inſtructive work, ſuppoſes Noah to be the genuine Oſiris. He informs us, that, as the principal rites in Egypt were confeſſedly for a perſon loſt and conſigned for a time to darkneſs, but who, after much bewailing and anxious ſearch, was at length found, and ſuppoſed to be reſtored to life, no alluſion could poſſibly point more directly than this to the previous diſappearance of the patriarch, to the perils and gloom with which he might well be ſuppoſed to be ſurrounded in the ark, and his conſequent emerging and final reſtoration to light and ſafety. He obſerves, that the emphatical expreſſion of the μυϛης, when purified, " I have eſcaped a ſad calamity, and my lot is greatly mended;" and, at the feaſt of Iſis, the exulting exclamation, Ευρηχαμεν, Συγχαιρομεν! *We have found the loſt* OSIRIS, *let us rejoice together!* have alſo a decided reference to the ſame event; that, among many other circumſtances corroborative of his poſition, not the leaſt convincing is the very ceremony adopted, during the efforts of the prieſts to find the miſſing object of their reſearch, that of a number of their body going down by night to the ſeaſhore, bearing a ſacred ſcyphus, in which was a golden veſſel in the form of a *ſhip* or *boat*,

 and

and into which they poured ſome of the water of the river; that this being performed, the ſhout of tumultuous joy above-mentioned broke forth from the crowd, and that then Oſiris was ſuppoſed to be found.* He winds up the whole of his argument, by proving, from Plutarch, that this ceremony of incloſing Oſiris in his tomb, or ark, in memory of his having been in his life-time thus concealed to avoid the fury of Typhon, their known ſymbol of the ocean, took place preciſely upon the ſeventeenth day of the ſecond month, after the autumnal equinox; that is, in fact, upon the very day on which the TRUE OSIRIS entered the ark, which, in Scripture, is ſaid to have taken place in the ſix hundredth year of Noah's life, ON THE SECOND MONTH, AND ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THAT MONTH.

The Eleuſinian aſpirant, after ablution, was clothed in a linen veſtment, the emblem of purity, and, we are informed,† in the Indian regiſter before-mentioned, that the Brahmin candidate, in the firſt ſtage of probation, was arrayed "in a linen garment without ſuture." But the myſtic temple itſelf, as deſcribed by Apuleius,

* Bryant's Analyſis, vol. ii. p. 333, 334, 335.

† Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 217.

Apuleius,* was *ædes amplissima*; according to Vitruvius, it was *immani magnitudine*; and, according to Strabo, it was capable of holding as large a number as a theatre.† If these several authors had intended to describe the pagodas of Salsette and of Elephanta, could they have done it with more characteristic accuracy? temples, of which the former, according to M. Niebuhr, is a square of 120 feet, and in the latter of which, if we are rightly informed in the seventh volume of the Archæologia, the grand altar alone is elevated to the astonishing height of twenty-seven feet. The gloomy avenues surrounding them have been also particularized; in which an overwhelming dread and horror seized the benighted wanderer; and, with respect to the gaudy shows and splendid scenery occasionally displayed to the view of the initiated in their recesses; who, that beholds the superb decorations, the richly-painted walls, and carved imagery, in the modern pagodas; who, that considers the beauty of the colours, and the ingenuity of the devices, conspicuous in many of the manufactures of India, whether in gold and

* Apuleii Metamorph. vol. i. lib. ii. p. 271.

† Strabonis Geograph. lib. ix. p. 380, edit. Basil.

and ſilver enamel, in boxes curiouſly inlaid with ivory, in carpets of ſilk richly flowered, and linens ſtained with variegated dies; can poſſibly entertain a doubt of the ability of the ancient Indians ſtrikingly to pourtray, on canvas or otherwiſe, the allegorical viſions, in which the genius of the nation takes ſo much delight; the amaranthine bowers, in which beatified ſpirits are ſuppoſed to reſide, and the Elyſian plains of EENDRA's voluptuous paradiſe?

The initiated, in the Grecian temples, were crowned with myrtle, and the Perſian prieſts of Mithra, and conſequently thoſe of India, (for the ſyſtem was the ſame,) were invariably decked with a rich tiara, wound about with the ſame foliage. Thus arrayed, the arch-prieſt, according to Herodotus, επαειδει θεογονιην, ſang the theogony, or ode reciting the origin of the gods. The hierophant, that is, the *revealer of ſacred things* in the Eleuſinian myſteries, was arrayed in the habit and adorned with the ſymbols of the great Creator of the world, of whom, in thoſe myſteries, he was ſuppoſed to be the ſubſtitute, and revered as the emblem. He was attended in his ſacred office by three aſſiſtant miniſters, of whom the firſt was called Δαδȣχος, or the torch-

bearer;

bearer; he was intended to represent the SUN. The second was denominated Κηρυξ, or the herald; he was considered as the type of the planet MERCURY. The third was called Ὁ ἐπι Βωμω, or the minister of the altar, and he was venerated as the symbol of the MOON. The same characteristic distinctions doubtless prevailed in those of India, where the Sun, Moon, and Mercury, under the name of Budha, for ever occur in the varied page of their mythology. There perhaps, as in the rites of Mithra in Persia, the chief gods attended in the assumed characters of the various constellations. Their physical theology, which led them, in various instances, to consider the Deity as an incarnate agent upon earth, would naturally lead them in those mysterious institutions to shadow out, under the person of the high presiding Brahmin, the supreme Creator of all things, and to decorate that sacred personage (the symbolical representation of Deity) after the manner of the Persian Mithra, with a loosely-floating tunic of a bright cerulean tincture, and spangled with innumerable stars. At the same time, their great attachment to astronomy would induce them to consider the priests, who officiated around him, as representing the planetary train moving

in their ſeveral ſtations by his immediate command and influence, and clothed with brightneſs from the reflection of his own tranſcendent glory.

SECTION VIII.

The wonderful Analogy, or rather the Identity, of the Indian and Greek mysterious Theology having, in the former Section, been fully shewn, it is the Author's Purpose in the present to inquire by what Channel the latter derived their Knowledge of the Indian Religion and Literature. — The Investigation commences with an Inquiry into the Æra of the Fabrication of the Caverns of India, and is pursued in a comprehensive Examination of the Arrangement and symbolical Ornaments of the Caverns of the Thebais, as represented by the best Writers and the latest Travellers. — Strong Features of Similitude every where apparent, as well in the Caverns, and their emblematical Sculptures, as in the mystical Theology, anciently prevailing in either Country, and which originally gave Existence to those Sculptures. — The Caverns, therefore, both of Egypt and India, fabricated by the ancient Cuthite Colonies from Chaldæa,

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in the earliest Periods of the World, before human Habitations and sacred Edifices were erected.—The Result of the Inquiry stated to be, that the Greeks obtained their Knowledge of the mysterious Rites of Asia, through the Medium of Egypt, at that remote Period in which their Philosophers visited the Sages of Egypt in the Caverns of the THEBAIS.

THE nature of the mysterious rites and sciences, anciently celebrated and taught in the caverns of ELEPHANTA and SALSETTE, has been extensively explained. The æra of the fabrication of those caverns is a point which cannot be settled with equal exactness; though it is probable that certain SANSCREET inscriptions, discovered on the walls of the former, and accurately engraved, but not explained, by M. Anquetil, may contain the desired information. An exact copy of them, we are informed, is now in the possession of the Asiatic Society, of which we may expect to see as correct a version in some future volume, and consequently this obscure point elucidated. The taste for hieroglyphic ornaments, displayed through those recesses in every part of India, (for those at Elora are still

ſtill more numerous and ſurpriſing,) has inclined ſome writers to think them the workmanſhip of Egyptian artiſts, and the idea apparently derives force from a tradition prevalent in theſe parts, and mentioned by Niebuhr, " that there came hither a certain foreign people, who, in one night, hewed all the figures in the rock, and went away the enſuing morning." Indeed, when we reflect that the ancient Egyptians, under the name of OSIRIS,* paid adoration to the ſun with fervour little inferior to that of the Perſians; that in their hieroglyphics, according to the repreſentation of Macrobius, they pourtrayed that divinity under the ſymbol of a *ſceptre and an eye*, the eye that ſurveyed and the ſceptre that commanded all things; and that the whole mountainous region of Upper Egypt, bordering upon the Nile, was crowded with ſubterraneous grottoes and caverns, abounding with aſtoniſhing hieroglyphic ſculptures, ſo ſimilar to thoſe in India, that ſkilful examiners have thought they diſcovered among the Thebais a great part of the Brahmin mythology; we are filled with equal aſtoniſhment and perplexity.

On

* The Lexicon of Jablonſki gives a new derivation of the word Oſiris, where is there deduced from OSH IRI, that is, *He who makes time.*

On this diſputable point let us firſt attend to Mr. Norden, a traveller whoſe pencil was as accurate in delineating as his pen was correct in deſcribing the antiquities of Egypt. If the Hindoos, according to the aſſertion of Ovington, abſurdly aſſign to a gigantic progeny, whom they thought alone adequate to the achievement of ſuch ſtupendous works, the fabrication of their caverns; ſo, in like manner, the Egyptians, Mr. Norden acquaints us, attribute the prodigious excavations with which the Thebais abounds to a ſimilar origin. "There reigns, among the people who at preſent inhabit Egypt, a tradition, that there were anciently in the country GIANTS, who raiſed, without much difficulty, the pyramids, the vaſt palaces, and the temples (external or ſubterraneous), which we have been juſt deſcribing."* Although the idea of their being fabricated by giants hardly deſerved a ſerious conſideration, yet this ingenious traveller has taken an opportunity, from the meaſure of the entrances into the caves, the dimenſions of the gates of the erected temples, and thoſe of the ſarcophagus remaining to this day in the largeſt of the pyramids, of demonſtrating what might

* See Norden's Travels in Egypt and Nubia, vol. i. p. 111, of the 8vo. edit. by Dr. Templeman. Lond. 1757.

might otherwiſe with ſome ſhadow of reaſon have been doubted, that the inhabitants of Egypt, in thoſe moſt remote periods, differed not in ſize from the preſent race of men. Theſe circumſtances he mentions as incontestable proofs, that the human race have not degenerated in ſtature: "for the ſarcophagus," he obſerves, "determines the ſize of the body of the monarch for whom the pyramid was erected: and the paſſages of that pyramid evince, that the workmen have not been of a larger ſize than the prince ſince the entrance and the egreſs ſcarcely afford ſufficient room for men of moderate ſtature, ſuch as they have at preſent."

Our learned countryman, that profound geometrician and aſtronomer, Mr. Greaves, who had viſited thoſe pyramids previouſly to Mr. Norden, and obliged the public with a deſcription of them and their contents mathematically correct, corroborates his opinion on this point. He deſcribes the internal dimenſions of the ſarcophagus as ſomewhat exceeding ſix feet in length, and not quite three feet in depth and breadth. "A narrow ſpace," he adds, "yet large enough to contain a moſt potent and dreadful monarch when dead, for whom, when living, all Egypt was too ſtrait

and narrow a circuit. By theſe dimenſions, and by ſuch other obſervations as have been made by me, from ſeveral embalmed bodies in Egypt, we may conclude that there is no decay in human nature; (though the queſtion is as old as Homer!) but that the men of this age are of the ſame ſtature of which they were three thouſand years ago, notwithſtanding St. Auguſtin and others are of a different opinion."*

The Brahmins alſo contend that the ſtature, as well as the age of man, is gradually decreaſing: ſo that, as I have had occaſion elſewhere to remark,† from Mr. Holwell, towards the cloſe of the CALLEE YUG, or preſent grand period of the world's duration, his ſtature ſhall be ſo reduced, " that he will not be able to pluck a BERENGELAH, or the *egg-plant*, without the aſſiſtance of a hooked ſtick." The fact is, that theſe prodigies of remote antiquity, raiſed in the mind an admiration and an awe, which mounted into a ſpecies of idolatrous veneration for the original fabricators: and, while they beheld ſuch amazing proofs of the

* See Mr. Greaves's Pyramidographia, in the firſt volume of his works, edited by Dr. Birch, p. 131, 8vo. Lond. 1737.

† On the Indian Coſmogony, in the firſt volume of the Hiſtory itſelf.

the grandeur of their minds, they thought they could do no leſs than accommodate them with a form in ſome degree proportioned to the magnitude of their intellectual powers.

Mr. Norden's ſeventh plate, equally beautiful as the others, exhibits a view of the grottoes of the great TSCHABEL ESSELSELE, or *chained mountain*; and I could wiſh to have preſented my ſubſcribers with an engraving of that mountain, together with a view of the Canarah Rock, ſince they both ſoar alike into the air, with a kind of wild grandeur, ſufficient to awe the mind of the ſavage into veneration, in the ſame plate; but I have already gone beyond my intended limits in the expenſive article of engravings, and they will therefore reſt contented with his verbal deſcription of them.

After giving an account of the *chained mountain* itſelf, ſo called from a boom or chain which formerly extended acroſs the Nile, from its baſis to a rock on the oppoſite ſhore, and barred the paſſage this way to an invading enemy, he proceeds to deſcribe the adjoining grottoes, "which are numerous, having their ſides entirely covered with the MOST BEAUTIFUL HIEROGLYPHICS." The light, entering only by the outlet of each grotto, was ſcarcely ſufficient to diſtinguiſh the various objects, but

but at length our traveller perceived an opening at the top, and began to make his ſketch.' Being ſhortly after interrupted in this work by the Arabians aſſembling in multitudes, he was only able to delineate "four figures in high relief ſitting, and in their natural ſize, two of them male and two of them female. The men who are in the middle have their arms folded acroſs the breaſt, (an attitude very common in the Indian caverns,) and each woman takes hold of a man under the arm."* Mr. Norden, however, took a leſs haſty ſurvey of the famous grottoes denominated SABABINATH, a name which *poſſibly* they may have derived from the ſpecies of Sabian ſuperſtition anciently practiſed in them. They are ſituated in the mountains bordering on the ſhore of the river Nile, called TSCHEBAT ELL KOFFERI; and the traveller muſt aſcend that mountain for two or three hours before he can arrive at the firſt gate. "Through this gate you enter into a large ſaloon, ſupported by hexagonal pillars, contrived in the rock itſelf. The roofs are adorned with paintings, which even at preſent we diſtinguiſh extremely well; while the gold, with which they were originally decorated, glitters on all ſides. Here and there we perceive

* Norden's Egypt, vol. i. p. 49.

perceive openings, which lead to other apartments; but, as they are filled with rubbifh, and as the paffages into them are embarraffed with it, few travellers choofe to venture themfelves there. Above, there is another apartment, to which you may with difficulty arrive, by climbing up on the outfide of the mountain. It is not fo extenfive a faloon as the former; but it is painted after a fimilar manner, and, like it, communicates with other adjoining apartments."*

Mr. Greaves, in defcribing the pyramid fecond in magnitude, expreffes his aftonifhment that no traveller before him had particularly noticed "two very ftately and elaborate pieces of cavern architecture," by which that pyramid is bounded on the north and weft fides. The following defcription of thefe rocky apartments, by that traveller, deferves particular notice, not becaufe the ftyle in which they are excavated at all refembles that of Elephanta, but becaufe they bear a very ftriking fimilitude to the convents of the Talapoins, or priefts of BOODH, defcribed by Father Loubere, in his account of the kingdom of Siam, whither, in 1687, he went as ambaffador from the king of France. There can be little doubt

* Norden's Egypt, vol. ii. p. 34.

but that the ſuperſtition of BOODH, who, we ſhall preſently ſee, is no other than the SOMMONACODOM, or ſtupendous ſtone deity of the Siameſe, came originally from Egypt — from that country where rocks and ſtones, hewn into a thouſand fanciful forms, firſt received the adoration of mankind: from the neighbourhood of thoſe lofty pyramids, the emblem of the SOLAR DEITY, and that coloſſal Sphynx, the ſymbol of the SUN in Leo and Virgo, which, majeſtic even in ruins, ſtill ſtrike with awe the aſtoniſhed ſpectator. The period of his arrival, however, on the ſhores of India, is involved in the profoundeſt obſcurity, and the greateſt ſcholars of Aſia have exerted upon that point, with various ſucceſs, their critical ſagacity. I ſhall preſently ſtate in brief what their ſeveral opinions are, reſerving, for a particular period of the enſuing hiſtory, the full inveſtigation of that perplexing event. For the preſent I ſhall only make one obſervation, as prefatory to the remarks immediately following, that, according to Loubere, their aſtronomers have fixed the death of Sommonacodom to the year before Chriſt 545; and remind the reader, that the date of the invaſion of Egypt, by Cambyſes, is fixed by Uſher to be in the year 525 preceding. A

peculiar

peculiar conjunction of the planets, Loubere informs us, about that period took place; when their first grand astronomical epocha commenced: all which circumstances, if the intelligence can be depended on, tend strongly to evince of what material use astronomy is towards rectifying the errors of chronology and fixing the doubtful events of history. About thirty feet in depth, says Mr. Greaves, and more than one thousand and four hundred feet in length, have these apartments been hewn out of the hard rock in a perpendicular line, and squared by the chissel, as he supposes, to serve as lodgings for the priests of the stupendous temple adjoining. This opinion of Mr. Greaves, I must observe, remarkably corroborates Mr. Bryant's judicious conjecture, that those amazing fabrics were not *solely* intended for sepulchres, but for observatories and temples, in which were celebrated the gloomy superstitious rites of the progeny of Cush.* Mr. Greaves proceeds to observe, that these caverns range along at a convenient distance, parallel to the two sides above-mentioned of this pyramid, " meeting

* See Mr. Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology, vol. iii. p. 580.

at a right angle, and making a very fair and graceful profpect." The entrance into them is by fquare openings, hewn out of the rock, not exceeding in magnitude thofe which he had defcribed before as forming the entrance of the firft pyramid, and which he had reprefented as narrow and quadrangular. The chambers within, he obferves, are likewife of a fquare form and well-proportioned, covered and arched above with the natural rock; in moft of which there was a paffage opening into an interior chamber, but fo obftructed with rubbifh, and fo involved in darknefs, as to forbid all penetration into their receffes. Thefe chambers, it can fcarcely be doubted, had fome fecret communication with the interior apartments of this pyramid, the entrance into which has, if ever known, been long fince forgotten. M. De la Loubere, among many interefting and curious particulars relative to the religious fentiments and public rites of the Talapoins, informs us, that this order of Siamefe priefts refides in convents, which confift of many little cells, ranged within a large fquare inclofure. In the middle of this inclofure ftands the temple. He then adds: "Certain PYRAMIDS ftand near and quite round the temple, which are

all

all incloſed within four walls."* PYRAMIDS and OBELISKS form a diſtinguiſhing feature in the Egyptian architecture. The whole country was covered with the former; and the reader, by caſting his eye on the engraving, which repreſents the auguſt remains of the temple of Luxore, in the Thebais, will obſerve, that the attachment of the Egyptians to the latter ſymbol was not leſs remarkable. In that plate he will ſee two OBELISKS of aſtoniſhing height and magnitude; and ſince, whereſoever the Egyptians extended their influence, this particular mode of ſymbolizing the Deity ſeems very generally to have prevailed, a forcible argument may thence be deduced, that it *originated* among a people ſo notoriouſly devoted to hieroglyphic worſhip.

Thebes was at once the conſecrated and the claſſic ground of Upper Egypt. There Science and Genius exhauſted all their powers in the fabrication of that auguſt temple to the Deity, of which one of the eight ſuperb portals is exhibited to the reader in a portion of this work: ſtupendous monument of the piety of that nation, ſcarcely injured amidſt the viciſſitudes of the elements and the revo-

* See La Loubere's Hiſt. of Siam. in Harris's Collection of Voyages, vol. ii. p. 482.

lution of near three thousand suns! The subterraneous recesses in this province, as described by the great traveller Pocock, are so prodigious, that they impress the mind with scarcely less astonishment and admiration than the exterior edifices. They are called, in the language of the country, BAB-EL-MELUKE, that is, the gate or court of the kings; and though, in the later periods of the empire, used as sepulchres for the sovereigns of Thebes, it is highly probable that they were anciently the residence of the living. Indeed our traveller himself expresses a similar belief, when he describes his entrance among them as into "a sort of street, on each side of which the rocky ground, about ten feet high, has rooms cut into it, some of them being supported with pillars; and, as there is not the least sign in the plain of private buildings, I thought that these, in the very earliest times, might serve as houses, be the first invention after tents, and contrived as a better shelter from wind and the cold of the nights."* Both Diodorus Siculus† and Strabo‡ mention

* Pocock's Description of the East, vol. i. p. 97, folio. Lond. 1743.

† Diod. Sic. lib. i. p. 43.

‡ Strabonis Geograph. lib. xvii. p. 816.

tion theſe excavations as prodigies of human labour, amounting in number to above forty; of which number, however, the entrance into only ſeventeen could be diſcovered by Pocock, and no more than nine could be penetrated. Of theſe he has preſented his readers with plans, of which, as they greatly illuſtrate every deſcription of this kind, I lamented the want in deſcribing the Indian caverns. His verbal account of them is, however, very clear and intelligible, and I ſhall therefore inſert it in this place.

"The hills on each ſide of the plain are high ſteep rocks, and the whole place is covered with rough ſtones, that ſeem to have rolled down from them. The grottoes are cut into the rock, in a moſt beautiful manner, in long rooms, or galleries, under the mountains, which are of a cloſe white free-ſtone, that cuts like chalk, and is as ſmooth as the fineſt ſtucco-work." This deſcription cannot fail of bringing to the mind of the reader the account, in a preceding page, of the ſtories or galleries cut in the rock of Canarah, ſo greatly reſembling human habitations, as to have obtained for them the denomination of the city of Canarah. I ought likewiſe to have before ſtated the very probable ſuppoſition of

Mr. Hunter, that, however ſince hardened by time and weather, theſe excavations were probably made when the rock was in a ſofter ſtate, and cut like the chalky free-ſtone here mentioned by Pocock. He proceeds thus in his intereſting narration: " Theſe galleries are for the moſt part about ten feet in height and width; four or five of them, one within the other, from thirty to fifty feet long and from ten to fifteen feet high, generally lead to a ſpacious room, in which is ſeen the tomb of the king, with his figure cut in relief on the lid. In the furthermoſt room of another, the picture of the king is painted on the ſtone, at full-length; both the ſides and the cielings of the chambers are ſculptured with hieroglyphics of birds and beaſts, and ſome of them painted, remaining as freſh as if they were but juſt finiſhed, though of ſuch remote antiquity. The ſepulchre marked A (in his plate) is moſt beautifully adorned with hieroglyphics cut into the ſtone and painted. Over the door the beetle is cut in a circle, and there is a human figure ſitting on each ſide. The galleries within have hieroglyphics ſculptured on each ſide, firſt in a ſort of compartment next to the cieling, in manner of a frieze; lower, figures are cut out, repreſenting mummies;

mies; below theſe, for ſeven feet from the ground, are hieroglyphics all down the ſides, divided by lines into different columns. In the middle of the cieling there are figures of men for about three feet in breadth, with STARS on each ſide. Among the hieroglyphics I obſerved many GOATS heads."* On this relation I muſt requeſt permiſſion to obſerve, that, as it ſeems abſurd to place *human* beings among the ſtars, the beings, thus delineated on the cieling, muſt be of celeſtial origin, like thoſe groups of GENII and DEWTAHS who are pourtrayed on the walls of the Indian caverns; and, with reſpect to the goats heads, it will be remembered, that the goat was an animal ſacred to PAN, who, I have already obſerved, was particularly worſhipped in a city of the Thebais, called, from that deity, PANOPOLIS, the modern AKMIN.

Having occaſion to mention this celebrated city, I cannot reſiſt the opportunity of bringing, from this authentic writer, a very convincing proof of what I have recently remarked, that the temples of Egypt were adorned with aſtronomical ſymbols, in the ſame manner as the ſubterraneous Indian caverns were. This aſſertion the following

curious

* Pococke's Travels, vol. i. p. 99.

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curious paſſage ſtrikingly corroborates. Wandering over the extenſive ruins of PANOPOLIS, the attention of Dr. Pocock was attracted by a ſtone of ſtupendous dimenſions, one of thoſe that probably once adorned the top of the magnificent temple of that deity, but half-buried in the ground. The part of this maſſy fragment, which protruded from the hill of ruins amidſt which it was involved, was eighteen feet in length, and on one ſide of it was " a very extraordinary ſculpture, which had been painted, and from which I concluded that it was a temple dedicated to the SUN. Within ſome ornaments there are four circles; in the inner circle there is a figure, probably repreſenting the Sun: the ſpaces between the two next are divided into twelve parts; in the firſt, twelve birds are cut in like ſeals; in the next, twelve figures, defaced; which I conjectured might be the TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC. The outer circle, not divided, has in it figures of men, if I miſtake not, to the ſame number. In each angle, between the outer circle and the ſquare ornaments that are round it, is a figure which may poſſibly repreſent the four ſeaſons. A wing extends along one ſide of it, from a ſort of globe, marked out in lines, which probably had another

another wing extending in the ſame manner, it may be, over ſuch another ſculpture. The ſtones, and ſome others of a temple near, are ſo large, that they cannot move them; nor do they uſe ſtones in building, but" (who can read the relation, without the moſt poignant indignation!) " they break in pieces theſe fine morſels of antiquity, adorned with hieroglyphics, and make lime of them. The entrance of this temple ſeems to have been to the SOUTH, as that of the other was, probably, to the NORTH. Moſt of it is white ſtone, mixed with pebbles, and adorned with hieroglyphics: one of them has STARS cut on it, which without doubt covered part of the building."* But I muſt return from the *temples* to the *caverns* of Thebes. I muſt reviſit thoſe gloomy ſepulchres of her departed monarchs, which, probably, in the earlieſt periods of the world, were the reſidence of the anceſtors of the human race. Let us once more, with ſilent ſtep and with reverential awe, explore the hallowed depoſitaries of royal duſt!

Purſuing his lonely journey through thoſe ſubterraneous apartments, our author found one, in which was the ſarcophagus of a king, adorned

* Pocock's Travels, vol. i. p. 78.

adorned with hieroglyphics in different columns, with figures of men, hawks, and bulls. The human figures were probably of the ſame nature with the beings above-mentioned; and the hawk, or IBIS, is the known ſymbol of ISIS, as the bull, or APIS, was of OSIRIS. In another was ſculptured a figure with its arms folded acroſs the breaſt; over it a GLOBE, and a man kneeling on each ſide. Dr. Pocock's deſcription of theſe ſepulchral grottoes concludes with an account of one of uncommon magnitude, in which, ſays he, "is a ſtatue of a man with a ſceptre in his hand, and on the cieling is a large figure of another man painted at top, with a particular ſort of ſceptre in his hand, and wings hanging down lower than his feet," (from this deſcription, probably HERMES,) "and covering the whole body: this is a very extraordinary figure, and the painting exceedingly freſh. At the entrance, on each ſide, are four men, cut into the ſtone, above the natural ſize, having heads of hawks and other animals: on the inſide, a tortoiſe and a man with a goat's head are cut within a circle on each of the pilaſters. At the entrance of K, a large bull's head is cut in relief, &c." The tortoiſe, the TESTUDO of the celeſtial ſphere, is the Hindoo ſymbol of

of ſtrength; upon which account Veeſhnu, in the ſecond or BARA AVATAR, aſſumes that form to ſupport the globe ſinking in the bed of the ocean. The head, and part of the body, of an immenſe BULL, we have obſerved, iſſues from the centre of the great pagoda of Jaggernaut; and that the rock, through which the Ganges ruſhes into Hindoſtan, is called the COW-HEAD ROCK. It is readily granted, that to whatſoever purpoſe they were *originally* devoted, theſe particular caverns were indubitably afterwards converted into ſepulchres; which circumſtance might poſſibly lead Mr. Ovington into the error of aſſerting that the Indian caverns likewiſe were burying-places. Two other caverns, however, of very ample dimenſions, which he viſited the following day, were certainly not dormitories for the dead, but habitations of the living, or ſacred receſſes for the performance of the moſt awful rites of religion. To the firſt of theſe he deſcended by a flight of ten ſteps, cut in the rock, which led to a room in which are ſquare pillars, likewiſe hewn out of the ſolid rock. "Beyond that, there is a long room with pillars ranging on each ſide: all the apartments are in like manner adorned with hieroglyphics; but the ſtone is ſcaled in ſuch a manner, and

is

is ſo black in ſome of the firſt apartments, that there is great reaſon to think the place has been damaged by fire. Beyond theſe rooms, the apartments extend to the right, there being ſeveral ſteps deſcending downwards: one part leads to a gallery, cut round the rock, which has ſome apartments on one ſide. In theſe, as well as in the apartments of the other grotto, marked B, are cavities cut perpendicular down to other chambers below, where I ſaw doors and openings, and where, probably, there are as many apartments above. One would almoſt imagine that theſe places were habitations for the living, and poſſibly might be cut under the palaces of the kings of the Thebes, if they were not the palaces themſelves." Of the ſecond of theſe extenſive caverns, marked B, in his plate, Dr. Pocock has given no particular deſcription, but, if we may judge from the plate which exhibits the plan upon which it was formed, it was fabricated of dimenſions and hewn with toil not leſs aſtoniſhing.

Before I conclude the account of the Egyptian caverns by this celebrated traveller, the reader may poſſibly not be diſpleaſed if I ſtate here, from the page immediately following that account, the dimenſions of a vaſt coloſſal

ſtatue,

ſtatue, which he diſcovered in ſome ruins adjoining to the grottoes juſt deſcribed and accurately meaſured. It will reſcue from the ſuſpicion of hyperbole the account given by me, from Niebuhr, of the dimenſions of the grand buſt in the Elephanta cavern, the centre face of which, he will recollect, alone meaſured, in length, five feet; that of the ſame face the noſe meaſured one foot and a half; that the width, from the ear only to the middle of the noſe, was three feet four inches; and that the ſtupendous breadth of the whole figure, between the ſhoulders, was near twenty feet.*

" This large coloſſal ſtatue," ſays Dr. Pocock, " is broken about the middle of the trunk: the head is ſix feet broad: from the top of the head to the bottom of the neck it meaſures eleven feet, and ſo it does from the bottom of the neck to the navel. It is twenty-one feet broad at the ſhoulders, the ear is three feet long and one foot four inches broad, and the foot is four feet eight inches broad." In another court of this ruined temple he ſaw the remains of " two ſtatues of black granite: that to the weſt, which is in a ſitting poſture, meaſured, from the hands only

* See page 149 of this volume.

only to the elbow, five feet; and thence to the ſhoulder four feet. The ſtatue, on the eaſt, is three feet five inches long in the foot: lying at a diſtance from it was the head, with the cap: it is three feet ſix inches long; and the ear is one foot in length."* If admiration ſhould be excited in the mind of the reader, on peruſing the account of the dimenſions of theſe ſtatues, to what an exalted point will his aſtoniſhment be elevated, when he caſts his eye upon the ſubſequent page, deſcriptive of the celebrated ſtatue of MEMNON, ſtanding upon a pedeſtal, which is alone above thirty feet in height and in width near twenty feet! I need not acquaint the claſſical reader that this is the famous ſtatue erected in the temple of SERAPIS, which is affirmed, on the firſt appulſe of the beam of the orient ſun, to have emited a diſtinctly audible ſound. It is repreſented, by Dr. Pocock, as compoſed of a particular ſort of porous dark granite, ſuch as he never ſaw before, and much reſembling the eagle-ſtone. The ſtatue itſelf is broken; but of the whole amazing maſs, the fabrication of which one would think muſt have exhauſted a quarry, ſome idea may be formed, from the magnitude of the leg and foot, ſtill remaining

* Pocock's Deſcription of the Eaſt, vol. i. p. 101.

maining entire. Of theſe an engraving, entirely covered with the inſcriptions of Greek and Roman travellers, who bore their atteſtation to its having ſent forth ſuch a ſound on the riſing of the ſun, appears oppoſite to page 104 of his firſt volume; and he found the height of the leg, " from the bottom of the foot to the top of the knee, to be about nineteen feet; from the bottom of the foot to the ankle, two feet ſix inches; to the top of the inſtep, four feet; the foot itſelf being five feet broad, and the leg four feet in depth."* Stupendous as theſe menſurations muſt appear, even theſe appear comparatively ſmall, when we conſider what is related in Pliny, concerning the wonderful Sphynx; for, that writer affirms, that the head was no leſs than one hundred and two feet in circumference; that the figure itſelf was ſixty-two feet high from the belly to the crown of the head; and that its entire length was 143 feet. It ought to be remarked here, that Pocock, in his deſcription of the Sphynx, has inaccurately cited Pliny, as ſtating the length of the figure to be only 113 feet; " whereas," ſays he, " my account makes it 130 feet, which are ſeventeen feet

* Pocock, vol. i. p. 102.

more than Pliny."* But the real number of feet mentioned in Pliny is 143, as ſtated above; and therefore his dimenſions, which are probably more exact, are thirteen feet leſs than the number of feet aſſigned by the Roman naturaliſt. Of its ancient altitude of ſixty-three feet, only twenty-ſeven now remain above the ſurface; ſo that about thirty-ſix feet muſt be buried in the accumulated ſand and gravel.

The reader has been juſt informed, that theſe ſtatues are of hard black granite, as are almoſt all the ancient ſtatues of Egypt. This circumſtance ſuggeſted to M. Volney, one of the moſt enlightened travellers that ever explored the Eaſt, the idea that the ancient Egyptians, to whoſe genius, talents, and learning, poſterity is ſo deeply indebted, were BLACKS likewiſe, ſince he thinks it was natural for them to chooſe that their ſtatues ſhould be compoſed of marble of the ſame colour with themſelves. The idea firſt occurred to him, on a minute inveſtigation of the ſphynx; for, when he beheld her black complexion, and her features preciſely thoſe of

negro

* Plinii Nat. Hiſt. lib. xxxvi. c. 12, and p. 390, of my edition by Aldus: and Pocock, vol. i. p. 46.

negro; and when he recollected, that Herodotus had long ago asserted his belief, " that the Colchi were a colony of Egyptians, because, like them, they had black skins and frizzled hair;" M. Volney immediately concluded, that the ancient Egyptians were real negroes, of the same species with all the natives of Africa. He has added to this suggestion many very ingenious and interesting reflections. He lays it down as a general rule, that the features of a nation are a kind of monument capable, in many cases, of elucidating and ascertaining the testimony of history concerning the origin of nations. " How is our astonishment excited, when we behold the present barbarism and ignorance of the Copts, descended from the ancient Egyptians, men of such profound genius and such exalted science; and when we reflect, that to the race of negroes, at present our slaves, the objects of such extreme contempt to Europeans as to render it a problem among them whether the understanding of negroes be capable of the same culture with that of WHITE MEN, yet that to this race we owe our arts, our sciences, and even the very use of speech."*

* See M. Volney's Travels in Egypt, vol. i. p. 83.

I ſhall hereafter endeavour to profit by theſe judicious remarks of M. Volney; and, when my hiſtory ſhall have at length commenced, I ſhall apply this rule of diſcrimination to ſome of the moſt venerated ſtatues of India. It is not a little remarkable, that, according to Herodotus, there were two Ethiopias; one in Africa, the other in Aſia: and, if the Delta of Egypt was peopled by the Thebaic Ethiopians, it is, at leaſt, poſſible, that the peninſula of Egypt might have for its firſt inhabitants the Ethiopians of Aſia. In addition to M. Volney's remarks on this ſubject, I muſt alſo be permitted to obſerve, that the ancients really did, in fabricating their ſtatues of men and objects, attend to the complexion, properties, or country to which they belonged. Mr. Addiſon, in his travels, elegantly remarks, that he never ſaw any ſtatue of SLEEP that was not of *black marble*; alluding, doubtleſs, to the night, which is appropriated to ſleep. All the ſtatues of the NILE, and in particular that fine one at preſent to be ſeen in the garden of the Vatican at Rome, are of black marble, emblematical of the colour of the Ethiopians, amidſt whoſe lofty mountains that river has its ſource.

"Uſque coloratis amnis devexus ab INDIS."

VIRG. Georg. 4.

This

This quotation from Virgil, concerning the Nile, is highly deſerving of notice, becauſe it affords additional evidence of what was aſſerted in the early pages of the Geographical Diſſertation, that the name of INDIA was extended by the ancients to Ethiopia; and that, in fact, from their ignorance of the geography of the higher Aſia, India and Ethiopia were ſometimes conſidered as the ſame country. The reader will recollect, that one of the idols, in the pagoda of Jaggernaut, is deſcribed by Captain Hamilton as A HUGE BLACK STONE, OF A PYRAMIDAL FORM; and the SOMMONACODOM, being the repreſentative of the Egyptian god and prophet BOODH among the Siameſe, is of the ſame ſable complexion. In the deſcription from the Ayeen Akbery, inſerted in a preceding page, of an immenſe temple erected to the ſun by an ancient rajah, the reader has been made acquainted, that in the front of the gate there ſtood a pillar of black ſtone, of an octagonal form, fifty cubits high: he will hereafter be informed, from Tavernier, that, in the pagoda of Benares, that traveller likewiſe obſerved a conſpicuous idol of black ſtone; and that the ſtatue of Creeſhna, in his celebrated temple of MATHURA, is of black marble. It is very remarkable, that one of the principal

ceremonies incumbent upon the priests of these stone deities, according to Tavernier, is to anoint them daily with odoriferous oils, a circumstance which immediately brings to our remembrance the similar practice of Jacob, who, after the famous vision of the celestial ladder, recorded in Scripture, *took the stone which he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a* PILLAR, *and poured oil upon the top of it.* It is added, that *he called the name of that place* BETH-EL; that is, *the house of God,* as the patriarch himself explains the word; *for this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be called* GOD'S HOUSE. Gen. xxviii. 18. This passage evinces, of how great antiquity is the custom of considering stones in a sacred light, as well as the anointing them with consecrated oil. From this conduct of Jacob and this Hebrew appellative, the learned Bochart, with great ingenuity and reason, insists that the name and veneration of the sacred stones, called BÆTYLI, so celebrated in all pagan antiquity, were derived.* These Bætyli were stones of a round form; they were supposed to be animated, by means of magical incantations, with a portion of the Deity; they were consulted, on occasions of great and pressing emergency, as a kind

* Vide Bocharti Sacra Geograph. lib.i. p. 38.

a kind of divine oracles, and were ſuſpended, either round the neck, or on ſome other part of the body, of the enraptured devotee. Of theſe conſecrated ſtones, ſome were dedicated to Jupiter and others to the SUN; but they were conſidered as in a more particular manner ſacred to SATURN, who is fabled to have ſwallowed one of theſe ſtones in the place of Jupiter, when he was ſeized with the ſanguinary furor of devouring his children. The fable proceeds to affirm, that the god having found his miſtake, and vomited it up again, this ſtone was preſerved near the temple of Delphi, where care was taken *to anoint it daily with oil*, and to cover it with wool, that had grown on the days of the SATURNALIAN feſtival.* The above relation affords a very remarkable proof (and it is very far from being the only one of the kind which theſe volumes will exhibit) how cloſely the pagan world imitated, and how baſely they perverted, the religious rites of the ancient and venerable patriarchs. Thus, the ſetting up of a ſtone, by this holy perſon, in grateful memory of the

* See Stephanus on the word Thaumaſius, and alſo Pauſanias, who more amply relates the ſtory. The meaning of this curious fable ſeems to be, that Saturn, or Time, (as the word Chronos, elegantly called by Horace *Tempus edax rerum*, ſignifies,) devours whatever he produces. His offspring are the revolving years.

celeſtial viſion vouchſafed him from above, and as a monument of the divine goodneſs, which had ſo conſpicuouſly guarded him in his journey, probably became the occaſion of all the idolatry paid, in ſucceeding ages, to thoſe ſhapeleſs maſſes of unhewn ſtone, of which ſo many aſtoniſhing remains are ſcattered up and down the Aſiatic, and, I may add, the European, world.

Theſe idol-repreſentations of Deity, it has been obſerved, were at firſt rugged and ſhapeleſs as the rock from which they were torn: and I am of opinion this argument may be fairly urged in favour of the high antiquity of many of thoſe rude and formleſs blocks, both of wood and ſtone, that are at preſent honoured with adoration in the moſt venerated pagodas of Hindoſtan. As mankind themſelves grew more poliſhed, and as ſtatuary improved, their deities were repreſented under forms leſs hideous and diſguſting; and thoſe forms were accommodated to the new notions of Deity which their earlieſt ſpeculations in phyſics, and their increaſing knowledge of aſtronomy, inſpired. The maſſy unhewn ſtones ſoon ſhot up into graceful pyramids and lofty obeliſks, after the model of the ſolar ray and the aſcending flame. The pyramidal form,

however,

however, did not univerſally prevail. Some of thoſe mighty maſſes were hewn into ſquare columns, obtuſe at the ſummit, whoſe four poliſhed ſides ſymbolized the four elements, or were carved to face the four cardinal points. The earth, ſays Euſebius, was repreſented by a cylindrical ſtone. The octagon black column, mentioned in the preceding page, might poſſibly have been fabricated in alluſion to ſome ſimilar notion deriving its birth from phyſics and aſtronomy. Even the form of the CROSS, as alluſive to the four elements, was no unuſual ſymbol in the pagan world; and indeed Tavernier, as we ſhall hereafter ſee, deſcribes two of the principal pagodas of India, Benares and Mathura, as erected in the form of VAST CROSSES, of which each wing is equal in extent.

Let not the piety of the catholic Chriſtian be offended at the preceding aſſertion, that the CROSS was one of the moſt uſual ſymbols among the hieroglyphics of Egypt and India. Equally honoured in the Gentile and the Chriſtian world, this emblem of univerſal nature, of that world to whoſe four quarters its diverging radii pointed, decorated the hands of moſt of the ſculptured images in the former country; and, in the latter, ſtamped its form upon the

moſt

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moſt majeſtic of the ſhrines of their deities. It repeatedly occurs on the Pamphylian and other obeliſks; and the antiquaries Kircher and Mountfaucon have both honoured it with particular notice. The CRUX ANSATA of Hermes is repreſented by the former as a moſt ſublime hieroglyphic, as a moſt myſterious and powerful amulet, endowed with an aſtoniſhing virtue, and as exhibiting one of the moſt complete mathematical figures; "*habentem longitudinem atque latitudinem, et quatuor angulos rectos;*" poſſeſſing at once both length and breadth, and having four right angles, at once alluſive to the four cardinal points of the world and typical of the four elements. In pages 277, 279, 280, and 281, of the third volume of his Œdipus, are ſymbolical repreſentations, copied from the Barberine obeliſk, of the four elements; FIRE, deſignated by a figure of Oſiris, as the ANIMA MUNDI, or ſoul of the world, with a hawk's head; the AIR, by a figure bearing on his head a cap adorned with an orb, and WINGS, the uſual emblem of the AIR on Egyptian monuments; the EARTH, by that of ISIS, the great mother of all things, with a calathus on her head, containing ears of grain, a bunch of flowers, and the horns of a cow, all emblems, as well as the ſwelling

boſom

bosom which the goddess displays, of fertility and plenty; and, lastly, WATER, typified by a statue bearing the head and face of the IBIS, a bird sacred to the Nile, and with the horns *lunæ sextilis*, of the MOON, which in the month of August was supposed to assist in causing the inundations of that river. All these figures, thus emblematical of the ELEMENTS, which are highly worthy a minute examination, bear the hallowed cross with its circular handle, by which they were collectively and strikingly represented. To the consideration of the same subject, Mountfaucon has also devoted a few interesting pages, which will hereafter claim our attention.

If M. Volney's argument, that the colour of the statue frequently denotes the descent and nation of the person sculptured, be allowed, I trust my own humble assertion, that the qualities and property of the object are often pointed out by the same means, will not be refused its weight, because it is founded on very ancient and respectable authority. I shall briefly state that authority. Porphyry, cited by Eusebius, expressly says, that the ancients represented the Deity by a black stone, because his nature is obscure and inscrutable by man.*

The

* Euseb. de Præp. Evang. lib. iii. l. 3. p. 31. edit. Basil. 1542.

The ancient Arabians, who lived in a region of rock, according both to Suidas* and Strabo,† continued to a very late period to worſhip the image of their tutelary god Mars, erected at Petra under the figure of a ſquare black ſtone; for *black*, ſay theſe authors, was thought a proper colour to veil the ſolemn myſteries of religion. The ſame rule ſeems to have been obſerved in ſtatues fabricated of wood, in the formation of which the diſtinguiſhing attribute or function of the deity was generally attended to. Pauſanias has enumerated the ſeveral kinds of wood made uſe of for this purpoſe. As the ebony, cypreſs, cedar, oak, yew, and box trees. Thus, to the formation of thoſe of Jupiter, the ſovereign of gods and men, the oak, the monarch of the woods, was devoted. Hence the myrtle, ſacred to Venus, compoſed the beautiful ſtatue of the queen of love. The olive, a tree conſecrated to ſcience, of which whole groves adorned Athens, the ſeat of learning and philoſophy, gladly ſubmitted to the axe to form the ſtatue of Minerva, the patron of the arts. Of the infernal deities, the funereal cypreſs and the baleful yew uſually

* Suidas in voce Deus Mars.

† Strabonis Geograph. lib. xvii.

ufually formed the gloomy and inaufpicious images.

It is now high time to conclude this excurfion to the caverns of the Thebais, and to ftate the refult of the inquiry. It remains for me to fhew, that the excurfion itfelf was not entirely unneceffary; but, by producing fome more particular proofs, as well as by a few ftriking and indifputable traits, to demonftrate that the mythology of the Hindoos and Egyptians had the fame origin, and in reality, even at prefent, are not greatly diffimilar. Many proofs of a general nature have been already adduced, and more ftill will be pointed out in the fecond chapter of this Differtation; when, after having defcribed the pagodas, I fhall proceed more minutely to confider the theological rites now practifed in them, and certain cuftoms and maxims originating in the folemnities of religion, common to both nations. For the prefent I fhall only remark, that there feems to have prevailed, in Egypt, a more ancient mythology than we have as yet received any fatisfactory account of; for, though the ftatues of the Nile and thofe in the Delta might be BLACK, poffibly becaufe fabricated by an Ethiopian race, yet we know from Eufebius, whom I muft quote

at

at length in my account of the Indian cofmogony, that the great CNEPH, that moft ancient divinity of Egypt, was a being of a DARK BLUE complexion,* the colour of the heavenly region from which he defcended. I muft alfo remark, that though the Sommonacodom be a black ftone, as reprefenting Boodh, who came to India from a nation of blacks, and though Creefhna was fo called from his black complexion, yet we have certain information from Sir William Jones, who I muft likewife hereafter cite more at length on this curious fubject, that the great ftatue of NARAYEN, or the Spirit of God, who at the beginning of time floated on the waters, as that ftatue is now to be feen elevated in the great refervoir of CATMANDU, the capital of Nepaul, is formed of BLUE MARBLE.† Cneph, therefore, and Narayen are evidently the fame deity, under two different appellations.

Eufebius, in his treatife, recently cited, De Preparatione Evangelica, which is a wonderful mine of Oriental theological fcience, and contains many fragments of the more ancient philofophers

* Vide Eufebius de Præp. Evang. lib. iii. cap. 11.

† See Sir W. Jones in the Afiatic Refearches, vol. i. p. 261.

philosophers of Asia, now lost, asserts, from Horus-Apollo, that the old Egyptians symbolized the world by a BLUE serpent with YELLOW scales; that is, as Horus-Apollo himself explains it, the firmament spangled with stars. In a preceding quotation, from M. Sonnerat, on the Indian mythology, the reader must have observed ideas very consonant to this in the manner in which their painters designated the planet SANI, or Saturn, *viz.* as a divinity of a BLUE colour, invested with serpents in a circle; and, in fact, to Eusebius's account it may be added, that, in our editions of Horapollo, he himself describes this mundane serpent, the Agathodaimon of Egypt, as in a circular position; for, it is the serpent wreathed into a circle, by holding his tail in his mouth.* By this they probably meant to shadow out the rotundity of the world; or, since the serpent, thus sculptured, was, among the Egyptians, the common emblem of eternity, they might possibly intend to intimate the old atheistical doctrine of its eternal duration.

It

* Serpentem pingunt, says Horapollo, qui suam ipsius caudam rodat; variis insterstinctam squamis. Per squamas, quidem, STELLAS, quibus cælum, seu mundus distinctus est, obscure indicantes. Vide Hori-Apollonis Hieroglyphica, p. 8, edit. duodecimo, 1631.

It has already been obſerved, in the Geographical Diſſertation,* that Sir W. Jones is inclined to derive the name of the river of Egypt from the Sanſcreet word NILA, or *blue*; and he cites Dionyſius, who expreſsly calls the Nile *an azure ſtream*, in corroboration of his opinion. Now it is exceedingly ſingular, that the Indus, in the early part of its courſe, ſhould be called the NILAB, from the *blue* caſt of its waters. Indeed one large branch of the Indus ſtill bears that name: and, poſſibly, it was the ſimilitude of their names, which led Alexander into that enormous error, recorded in Arrian, of imagining, upon his arrival at the banks of the Indus, that he had diſcovered the ſources of the Nile. But let us proceed to ſtate ſome farther particulars, in which this ſimilitude is ſtill more directly and diſtinctly viſible.

If Brahma, in the act of creation, be painted in the pagodas floating over the ſurface of the vaſt watery abyſs, while he reclines upon the expanded leaf of the lotos; exactly in the ſame attitude, and recumbent upon the ſame ſacred plant, does the figure of Oſiris conſtantly occur on all the monuments of Egyptian

* See the foregoing Diſſertation in page 302, and Major Rennel's remark upon the colour of the Nilab, there cited.

Egyptian antiquity. Inſtances of the latter deity, thus deſignated, may be ſeen by the inquiſitive reader in Kircher, Kæmpfer, Mountfaucon, and in the curious and elaborate work of M. D'Ancarville, who has attempted, from a ſeries of commemorative coins and medals, to give us a hiſtory of the earlieſt progreſs of the arts and the diffuſion of ſuperſtitious rites throughout the ancient world. In the firſt volume alſo of this hiſtory, I ſhall be happy, from my own rather extenſive collection made for the elucidation of it, to preſent the reader with engravings of ſome of the more remarkable repreſentations on ancient coins and ſculptures; particularly of OSIRIS UPON THE LOTOS, THE SERPENT-WORSHIP, and THE MUNDANE EGG; all of which notions were as familiar to the ancient Hindoo ſages as ever they were to the Egyptian, Perſian, and Greek, philoſophers; and, as appears to me, at a period far more remote than, from any remaining annals of theſe latter nations, it can be proved they flouriſhed among them. Theſe plates, however expenſive they may be to the author, will prove of infinite uſe towards illuſtrating the comparative deſcription, which it is my intention to exhibit, of the

Oriental cofmogonies, and will, in particular, throw great light on the ancient hiftory and mythology of Hindoftan.

The laft of thofe celebrated antiquaries mentioned above, M. D'Ancarville, decidedly corroborates what I have before remarked on the ancient worfhip of ftones, gradually improving in form and grace, from the rude block adored in Scythia, as the reprefentation of Deity, to the polifhed and elegant ftatues of Greece;—Greece which, he obferves, added nothing but beauty to the idea of the Deity, entertained by thofe who conceived his majefty and attributes to be moft properly reprefented by gigantic fculptures and maffy fymbols. The commencing of his laborious inveftigations by *medals*, rather than by *defigns*, was a ftep equally novel and judicious, fince the engraved tablet of brafs and copper, as I have in my preface obferved, with refpect to thofe dug up in India, bids fair to remain, when the fculptured ftone fhall have crumbled into duft, and the tints of the moft glowing picture fhal have been totally obliterated. Ancient coins he fays, not only preferve impreffed the figure under which the gods were worfhipped, bu in their very formation are emblematical o thofe figures. According to Plutarch, he re

mark

marks, that the moſt ancient Greek coins are of an *obeliſcal* form, and intended to imitate the ſolar ray: they repreſent javelins, or to uſe his own words, *les bèlemnites*, commonly called the *thunder-ſtone*, of which javelins were anciently made. Of coins, bearing this obeliſcal form, there is great variety exhibited in his firſt volume: but it was not ſo much my intention to mark this, though a circumſtance extremely curious, as the ſucceeding obſervation. M. D'Ancarville aſſerts, that the *belemnite* coins, which repreſent the thunder, that is, the power of the Almighty, and, conſequently, the *Deity by his ſymbol*, are often found ſurrounded by the tamara-leaf, to ſignify that thunder is engendered in the region of clouds created by the water, near which the tamara conſtantly grows. For the proof of this aſſertion, he refers us to the valuable collection of an ingenious gentleman of our own country; ſince, in the muſeum of Mr. Charles Townley, he obſerves, that the SACRED FIRE, on an ancient candelabre of white marble, is repreſented as ſurrounded by a tamara-leaf.* Now the plant of the tamara is the ſame with the NELUMBO of Linnæus.

* See M. D'Ancarville's Récherches ſur l'Origine et les Progrès des Arts de la Grece, tom. i. p. 6, edit. 4to, à Londres, 1785.

næus. It is an aquatic plant, of the genus of the nymphæa, and, if I may judge from a print of it in Kæmpfer,* not diſſimilar from the LOTOS, on which Brahma and Oſiris float upon the chaos. The candelabre of Mr. Townley, therefore, appears at once to reſolve the whole myſtery; for, ſince we have repeatedly obſerved, from Plutarch, that Oſiris is the ſun; and ſince Sir William Jones informs us, that the names of Brahma, Veeſhnu, and Seeva, coaleſce, and form the myſtical word OM; a word which in the ancient Sanſcreet character ſignifies neither more nor leſs than the SOLAR FIRE; the conſequence is, that the ancient Egyptians and Indians adored the ſame deity, under two different appellations; that deity which I have proved was ſo univerſally worſhipped in Perſia, and throughout Aſia, THE SUN.

As Oſiris and Brahma thus nearly reſemble each other, at leaſt in the paintings and ſculptures of the Eaſt, ſo if we examine the character and attributes of SEEVA, the deſtroying

* See Kæmpfer's Hiſt. of Japan, vol. ii. and plate 37. The reader, who poſſeſſes and will turn to Kæmpfer's curious book, will there ſee the great god of Japan, with innumerable arms, all adorned with various ſymbols, ſeated upon the TAMARA.

ing power of this country, his functions exhibit too close a parallel to those of the TYPHON, or evil genius of Egypt, to permit us to hesitate one moment in pronouncing that they originally sprang from one central and common source.

During the whole of our progressive survey of the *caverns of Upper Egypt*, and the mythological sculptures illustrative of the ancient worship of that country, increasing evidence seems to have arisen, that they were originally invented by the same ingenious race, and fabricated by the same skilful hands. Travellers, who have visited Egypt in periods far more recent than those in which the above-cited authors journeyed thither, confirm the truth of their relation, in regard both to the number and extent of the excavations, the beauty of the sculptures, and their similitude to those carved in the *caverns of India*. The final result, therefore, of this extended investigation is, that, in the remotest periods, there has existed a most intimate connection between the two nations, and that colonies, emigrating from Egypt to India, or from India to Egypt, transported their deities into the country in which they respectively took up their abode. But, as the Brahmin, if he quit

his native ſhore, violates the precepts of his religion, of the two hypotheſes, *that* is the more probable which aſſigns the fabrication of them to the enterprizing, the daring, Cuthites, the anceſtors of the race of Mizraim. When we farther conſider, that ſome of theſe travellers, more intimately exploring the Egyptian caverns, and more minutely examining the ſculptures with which they are adorned, have poſitively aſſerted, that they diſcovered among them the figures of the gods* JAGANAUT, GANEES, and VEESHNU, we can hardly refuſe our aſſent to an opinion ſupported by ſuch ſtrong evidence. " Oppoſite Miniah," ſays M. Savary in his thirtieth letter on Egypt, " is the village of Gerabia; and, farther up, that of Saonadi. Here the grottoes of the Thebais begin, famous for the auſterity of the anchorets, who retired hither during the primitive ages of Chriſtianity. They extend for twenty leagues, as far as facing Manfelout, and were excavated by the ancient Egyptians. The hieroglyphics, found in them, atteſt their antiquity." To thoſe who are decidedly of opinion, that the Indians are deſcended

* Theſe, in particular, are the ſentiments of M. CHEVALIER, many years governor of CHANDERNAGORE. See Savary's Letters, vol. ii. p. 6.

defcended from HAM, by RAMA, the fon of CUSH, the pointed fimilitude in thefe and innumerable other inftances, between them and the Egyptians, will appear by no means furprifing; but how far that opinion may be probable is a fubject which in the enfuing hiftory will be confidered at fome extent.

Other writers, indulging a ftill wider fcope of conjecture, have traced to Ethiopia, that country of eternal rock, the original fabricators of this kind of cavern-temple. Their opinion is founded upon the defcription which Ludolphus* gives of the early and flourifhing ftate of architecture in that country, evident in the vaft ruins of the ancient capital of AXUMA, and of many magnificent temples cut out of the live rock. Indeed, in confirmation of the opinion, that religious ceremonies in Ethiopia, at no very remote period, were performed in caverns, I may obferve, that, in an edition of that author now lying before me, there is a very curious engraving on the lid of a coffin, " dug up, fays Ludolph, in a Chriftian church-yard, near the high-way called *Prifcillas*," which reprefents the participation of the holy communion, by fome early Chriftian converts, in the dark recefs of a

* Ludolphus's Hift. Ethiop. p. 170, edit. 1682.

ſacred grotto. A remark of Mr. Hunter may alſo with more propriety be noted here than it could have been before; that many circumſtances would induce us to ſuppoſe the Indian caverns to have been conſtructed by a very different race of men from thoſe who at this day inhabit the country. The reaſons, which that gentleman aſſigns for holding this opinion, are founded upon the natural indolence that diſtinguiſhes the preſent inhabitants, apparently incapacitating them for works of ſuch enormous labour; and upon their general ignorance of that graceful elegance of form and proportion of feature which conſtitute the principal beauty of ſculpture, and which, in ſo remarkable a manner, diſtinguiſh the majority of the figures juſt deſcribed. "But, farther, it is natural to ſuppoſe that thoſe artiſts would take the model of their work from among themſelves; theſe figures, however, are very far from reſembling the preſent race of Indians. The general form of the body is more robuſt and muſcular; but the moſt remarkable difference lies in the countenance, *which is broad and full; the noſe flat; the lips, particularly the under-lip, remarkably thick*; and the whole combination of features of a drowſy appearance, very unlike

like that acute and ſprightly look which diſtinguiſhes the natives of Hindoſtan."*

Since both the Egyptians and Ethiopians were the undoubted deſcendants of Ham, as poſſibly might be the Hindoos; and, conſequently, ſince all muſt be ſuppoſed to have been infected with the original idolatry of Chaldæa, that primeval country, where their anceſtors ſo long reſided; I ſhall again preſent the reader with an extract from the ſame prophet whom I cited in a former page, in elucidation of the ſuperſtitious rites practiſed in the myſtic cell of Egypt, and of the ſculptures pourtrayed on the walls, both of thoſe cells and the caves of India. Whoever attentively conſiders what, from various authors, and ſome of ſuch unimpeachable veracity as Niebuhr, Hunter, and Perron, has been before related, concerning the ſplendid *regal* ornaments that decorate the *head* and *neck*; the *zones*, jewelled or ſerpentine, that gird round the *waiſt* of the Indian ſtatues; whoever, in India, has ſeen the profuſion of vermilion or ſaffron, with which, according to his caſt, the devout Hindoo, at the performance of his ſacred JUGGEN, marks both his own forehead and that of the deity he adores, muſt agree with

* Archæologia, vol. vii. p. 301.

with me, that no allufion to thofe ornaments can be apparently more direct, and no defcription of the images themfelves more accurate, than the following in Ezekiel. Under the character of ABOLIBAH, an abandoned proftitute, does JEHOVAH thus parabolically ftigmatize the idolatrous devotion of the apoftate Judah. — *She doated upon the Affyrians, her neighbours; captains and rulers, clothed moft gorgeoufly.* — *And, when fhe faw men pourtrayed upon the walls, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity; then, as foon as fhe faw them with her eyes, fhe doated upon them, and fent meffengers unto them unto Chaldea.* And, again, towards the clofe of the fame chapter, it is faid — " *Moreover this they have done unto me:* WHEN THEY HAD SLAIN THEIR CHILDREN TO THEIR IDOLS; *then they came, the fame day, unto my fanctuary to profane it.* — *And, furthermore, ye have fent for men to come from far, unto whom a meffenger was fent; and, lo! they came, for whom* THOU DIDST WASH THYSELF, (that is, perform ablutions,) PAINTEDST THINE EYES, AND DECKEDST THYSELF WITH ORNAMENTS.

ORNAMENTS. *And ſatteſt upon a ſtately bed, with a* TABLE (that is, an altar) PREPARED BEFORE IT, WHEREUPON THOU HAST SET MINE INCENSE AND MINE OIL. *And a voice of a multitude, being at eaſe, was with her, and with the men of the common ſort were brought Sabians** (that is, worſhippers of the planets) *from the wilderneſs,* WHICH PUT BRACELETS UPON THEIR HANDS, AND BEAUTIFUL CROWNS UPON THEIR HEADS."†

We have now travelled through the caverns of the Thebais, thoſe moſt ancient and ſacred retreats, ſucceſſively the manſions of the illuſtrious living and the repoſitories of the mighty dead: we have explored their inmoſt receſſes, and examined their ornamental ſculptures. We have, in the courſe of our progreſs, purpoſely omitted to take any very particular notice of thoſe numerous and ſuperb ſtructures in their neighbourhood, whoſe height and majeſty, even in ruins, awe the aſtoniſhed ſpectator, becauſe it is our intention to devote a future chapter of this work entirely to the conſideration of that ſtupendous ſpecies

* The term SABIAN is derived from SABA, a hoſt; that is, THE HOST OF HEAVEN.

† Ezekiel, chap. xxiii. ver. 14, 15.

ſpecies of maſſy architecture and hieroglyphic decoration, which alike diſtinguiſh ancient Egypt and ancient India. The Greeks, who poſſeſſed no quarries in ſuch abundance, and had a more correct taſte, in this walk of ſcience alone rejected the model of their maſters.

This ſurvey finiſhed, the only remaining ſubject of inveſtigation is, by what channel the Greeks arrived at ſo intimate a knowledge of the mythology of India, as their paintings, their emblematical ſculptures, and their ſacred fables, for the moſt part borrowed from that country, prove them to have acquired? Was it by means of the commercial intercourſe which was opened with the latter country by the conqueſts of Alexander, and carried on under the government of the Ptolemies, his ſucceſſors, in Egypt? That period is ſurely too late in the annals of time, ſince the vaſt and complicated ſyſtem of the Greek mythology was formed, and vigorouſly flouriſhed, previouſly to the invaſion of Alexander. We muſt ſearch for the origin of the connexion, as well as the ſource of this analogy, in æras far more remote, even at that diſtant period when the philoſophers and theologiſts of Greece ſucceſſively reſorted

to the colleges of Upper Egypt, and imbibed the principles of wiſdom and ſcience at its *ſuppoſed* fountain-head, amidſt the gloom and ſolitude of thoſe ſacred caverns which Pocock and Norden have ſo accurately deſcribed.

That, even at this diſtant period, their acquaintance with the literature and mythology of the Higher Aſia did by no means *commence*, though the reſult of their knowledge might be then firſt formed into a regular ſyſtem, will hereafter be made clear to the reader in a future chapter upon the pure original theology of Aſia, and the Oriental Triads of Deity; ſince the Phœnician Taut and the Thracian Orpheus, whoſe reſpective ſyſtems will be extenſively conſidered, and both of whom flouriſhed before the Trojan war, doubtleſs laid the foundation-ſtone of the fabric of Grecian ſcience and theology. Thales, however, being univerſally conſidered as the father of the Grecian philoſophy, it will be ſufficient, in this place, to trace the veſtigia of that venerable ſage in his expedition to Egypt. Our hiſtorical review of the doctrines and travels of Pythagoras and Plato, in which the preceding aſſertions will be more amply verified, muſt be reſerved for a future portion of this work.

This first and wisest of the renowned Σοφοι of Greece was born at Miletus, and flourished at the beginning of the sixth century before Christ, and consequently near three hundred years previous to the irruption of the Macedonians into India. From the circumstance of his having invented the constellation of the Little Bear, some ancient authors, and among them Hyginus and Suidas,* supposed Thales to have been a Phœnician, but the fact itself of his having first formed into a constellation the stars of the Ursa Minor is exceedingly doubtful, since the Phœnician navigators, in their daring expeditions to the most distant regions of the globe, during ages far anterior to that of Thales, could scarcely have performed those remote voyages without the help of the guiding ray, shed by the pole-star, from the very centre of the Arctic circle. Its name of Cynosura is undoubtedly Grecian, being compounded of κυνος and ουρα, *the tail of a dog:* but its more ancient name was Phœnice, which immediately points to its inventors, the old Phœnicians. All that can be allowed is, that he brought this asterism from Phœnicia, whither

* See Suidas in voce Thales, and Hyginus in Astronom. lib. ii. p. 126.

whither it is acknowledged he travelled, into Greece. The expedition of Thales into Phœnicia, according to Laertius,* his geographer, took place at an early period of his life: it was in a more advanced ſeaſon of it that he viſited the ſages of the great Dioſpolis, or Thebes. At that period the three grand colleges of Egyptian learning, that of Heliopolis, that of Memphis, and that of Thebes, flouriſhed in the zenith of their glory under the patronage of Amaſis, a prince renowned for equity and wiſdom. As yet the frantic Cambyſes had not poured deſolation over the fertile valley of Egypt, ſlaughtered her prieſts, or burned her temples. This calamitous event, ſo fatal to the power and the ſciences of Egypt, took place under the ſucceeding reign of Pſammenitus, his ſon and ſucceſſor, who was himſelf the victim of the fury of that ſanguinary conqueror. Thoſe colleges Thales ſucceſſively viſited; as did Pythagoras afterwards, but under leſs auſpicious circumſtances, the latter being taken priſoner by Cambyſes and ſent captive to Babylon. It was happy for ſcience, and appears like the hand of that all-wiſe Providence which directs, unſeen, the affairs of mortals, which

* Diogenes Laertius in Vita Thalis, p. 58.

which exalts and puts down empires, and permits the ray of ſcience to beam alternately on every country of the earth, that theſe wiſe and pious men ſhould have gone to Egypt, in queſt of knowledge, at the very juncture when its divine light was about to be extinguiſhed for ever in that devoted country, and ſhould have ſnatched a torch from the altars of the muſes in Egypt, to kindle a brighter and purer flame on their riſing altars in Greece.

Thales was received into high favour and much admired by king Amaſis. Having been inſtructed by the prieſts of Memphis in the principles of geometry, a ſcience in which they excelled, he, at that prince's deſire, meaſured the altitude of the pyramids by their ſhadow.* When he returned to Greece he very much improved that ſcience, inſtructed Pythagoras in it, and is ſuppoſed to have invented many of the propoſitions in Euclid. Under the Heliopolitan prieſts, who, as may be ſuppoſed of prieſts officiating in *the city of the ſun*, were more addicted to aſtronomy, he perfected thoſe aſtronomical ſtudies which he had commenced in Phœnicia, and afterwards taught that ſcience to his countrymen,

* Plutarch in Sympoſiac. p. 36.

men, as yet inexperienced in its wonderful arcana. Thales, if the accounts that have come down to us may be credited, which the learned Mr. Coſtard is very much inclined to doubt,* not only firſt found out the true length of the ſolar year, but predicted an eclipſe of the ſun, which preciſely came to paſs at the time predicted, and put an end to the five years war carried on between the Lydians and Medes, who, thinking the gods diſpleaſed by the ſudden turning of day into night, terminated their differences by a laſting peace.† The determination of the length of the year, and the prediction of this famous eclipſe, could not, however, have been effected without a mathematical apparatus and aſtronomical tables, which cannot be ſuppoſed to have exiſted, in Greece, in that infant ſtage of the ſcience. Thales, therefore, undoubtedly borrowed his information, in both theſe reſpects, from the Egyptian prieſts, who we know, from the moſt authentic writers of antiquity, could calculate eclipſes, and who had long before engraved the number of the days of the reformed year upon the great golden circle that adorned the tomb of

* See his Letters on the Riſe of Aſtronomy, p. 95.

† Herodoti, lib. i. p. 46.

of Oſymandes. But the ſuperb ſepulchre of Oſymandes was at Thebes, and, therefore, we muſt now finally follow the ſteps of our philoſopher, during his anxious wanderings in queſt of truth and ſcience, to thoſe caverns of the Upper Egypt which we have ſo lately explored.

Philoſophers, it has been already obſerved, ever loved the ſilence of groves and the ſolitude of caves. While Monarchy ſwayed the ſceptre in Thebes, and Luxury indulged her bloated progeny in that celebrated metropolis with all the rarities of the Eaſt, Science had taken up her abode in the rocky receſſes adjoining, and roots and water alone compoſed the frugal banquet of the ſages who tenanted the caverns that lined the borders of the Nile. Pythagoras himſelf on his return to Samos, after a reſidence of two-and-twenty years in Egypt, though he erected a ſchool for the public ſtudy of philoſophy within the city, yet reſided without the city in a cavern, where he delivered his more myſtical and profound diſcourſes; and in like manner the more deep and recondite ſciences of Egypt were alone taught, by her ſequeſtered ſacerdotal tribe, in the gloomy adyta and ſubterraneous grottoes of the Thebais.

In attempting thus to trace the footsteps of the first and wisest of the Greeks, during ages involved in deep historical obscurity, and to prove that Thales really did derive from the sages of Egypt the great outlines both of his theology and philosophy, we ought by no means to omit mentioning a few strong collateral circumstances which immediately tend to establish our hypothesis. The Egyptians were at that time devoted to hieroglyphics and to a mythological cast of sentiment. The history both of their Dii Majores and Minores was composed of a series of physical fables and ingenious allegories, allusive to the celestial phænomena; and can it, therefore, excite wonder that Greece, whose earliest philosophers were pupils of the Egyptian sages, should pursue the same course of fabling and allegorizing, surpassing their masters as well in the boldness as in the elegance of their romantic fictions? The genii which presided in the signs of the Egyptian zodiac are, for the most part, the deities of Greece. In the Grecian Apollo, who does not trace the Osiris of Egypt? and, in their winged Mercury, the Hermes of that country, in which *wings* were so usual a symbol, that Scripture itself

denominates it *the land ſhadowing with wings?** But, in fact, the Egyptian Oſiris is the Eſwara of India, and Hermes is no other than the celebrated Indian deity Bhood, the offſpring of SOMA, the moon, and the nymph ROHIHI, the bright ſtar in the Bull's head perſonified; that is, allegory apart, this perſonage was born when thoſe orbs were in conjunction. The ſtars, which form the brilliant cluſter called the Pleiades, were reſpectively perſonified, in Sanſcreet hiſtory, by as many beautiful nymphs, the ſuppoſed daughters of a renowned rajah, long before the Grecian mythology was formed, and it is but juſt to allow to the older nation the prior claim of invention. The hydra, alſo, which the Grecian Hercules ſlew, that is, which the ſun, riſing in the conſtellation Hercules, with a brighter beam obſcured the light of, has been known of old in thoſe writings by the name of Seſhanaga, or King of Serpents. He rules over the inferior hemiſphere; for, he ſets when the ſun riſes; and he poſſeſſes, like his Grecian copy, numerous heads, each head adorned with a flaming gem, by which they mean the ſtars that compoſe it. From India, however, the Greeks did not directly obtain

* Iſaiah, chap. xviii. ver. 1.

obtain this curious piece of mythology; for, Sefhanaga firft became the Egyptian Typhon, a word derived from *tuphon*, deluge, like hydra from υδωρ, *water*,) that malignant Typhon, the Scorpion of their zodiac, whom Horus, the fon of Ofiris, that is *light*, pierced through and through with innumerable arrows. I fhall not, for the prefent, purfue thefe details of aftronomical mythology, fince they will neceffarily occupy a large portion of the early pages of the intended hiftory; but haften to the conclufion of this prolonged chapter, by ftating, as far as the glimmering light reflected from ancient Grecian records will permit, what other doctrines of a theological and philofophical kind prevailed in Egypt, and were thence imported into Greece during the reign of Amafis.

Two very ftrong circumftances may be adduced in proof that the Egyptians, at the period of our philofopher's vifit, although the fuperb temples of Luxore were already erected, had not wholly relinquifhed their attachment to rock-built temples and cavern-devotion; for, that monarch himfelf, according to Herodotus,* had caufed to be hewn out of the folid rock a vaft chapel, confifting of one entire

* Herodotus, lib. ii. p. 178, edit. Steph.

entire ſtone, in the excavation and finiſhing of which, 2000 choſen maſons were employed for three whole years; and this immenſe ſtructure was afterwards conveyed down the Nile, from the city of Elephantis, to Sais, a diſtance of twenty days ſail, where it was placed in the veſtibule of the venerated temple of Minerva. The author alſo records many other erections of Amaſis, all in the maſſy coloſſal ſtyle of architecture; and, what is very much to our preſent purpoſe, informs us, that, behind the aforeſaid temple of Minerva, certain ſepulchral vaults or ſhrines were fabricated for the celebration of rites too awful to be named by him; that, close adjoining, there were columns; probably of Phallic deſignation, for, the ſymbol of Oſiris as well as of Seeva, in his generative capacity, was a column of vaſt height and magnitude; and that there was alſo an extenſive lake, of an orbicular form, lined with ſtone, intended, doubtleſs, for the purpoſe of purification, like the tanks of India. He concludes this important information, ſo direct and deciſive, by expreſsly declaring, that in this lake the prieſts performed thoſe ſolemn nocturnal ſhews, *which the Egyptians call* MYSTERIES, τα χαλεοισι

μυςηρια

μυςηρια Αιγυπτιοι.* It was to revenge an affront offered by Amafis to Cambyfes, who had demanded his daughter in marriage, but on whom the former had impofed the daughter of his predeceffor Apries for his own, that the Perfian monarch invaded Egypt, and, notwithftanding his temporary fubverfion both of its civil and religious government, evident teftimony has, in the preceding pages, been exhibited of the refumption of cavern-worfhip after his departure, in the plate reprefenting a folar facrifice, fculptured on a rock in the Thebais, in which the fymbols of the Egyptian and Perfian devotion are vifibly blended.

While Thales fojourned in the caverns of the Thebais, he probably learned from the Egyptian feers that diftinguifhing axiom of the Ionic philofophy, *aquam effe initium rerum*, or, THAT WATER IS THE PRINCIPLE OF ALL THINGS;† a doctrine fo remarkably confonant to the Mofaic and Brahmin philofophy, as well as to that obfervation of Homer, which he had probably borrowed from the Orphic fchool, 'Ωκεανος οσπερ γενεσις παντας τετυκται, or, "the Ocean is the great fource of the generation of all things." Hence flowed all the refpect,

* Heredotus, lib. ii. p. 179, edit. Steph.

† Cicero de Nat. Deorum, lib. i. cap. 10.

respect, and even veneration, paid in Eastern climes to the LOTOS, or water-lily, a plant which continually keeps its expanded petals floating above the surface of the waters, to whatever height they rise; and hence the frequent use of that allegorical symbol in the decoration of the temples of Egypt and Greece. In those rocky retreats also, so well calculated for profound meditation on the nature and attributes of God, he learned that other sublime axiom ascribed to him by Clemens Alexandrinus: for, this author affirms, that, " on its being demanded of Thales, *what God was?* he answered, *that which has neither beginning nor end*;"* doubtless alluding to that most ancient symbol, the *orb*, or *circle*, by which it will hereafter be more particularly proved the Egyptians designated the Deity. Thus, also, the Indians, in an ancient shastah, defining the Supreme Being, asserted, that " God was like a perfect sphere, without beginning and without end."† It should, however, be remarked, in honour of Thales, that, when he asserted that water was the principle of all things, he meant a subordinate and physical principle; for, according to Cicero, he added,

Deum

* Vide Stromata, p. 5.

† Holwell's Interesting Historical Events, part ii. p. 31.

Deum esse eam mentem quæ ex aqua cuncta fingeret; or that God was the demiurgic mind which formed all things out of water.* On another occasion he asserted, that God was πρεσβυτατον παντων, *the oldest of all things*; and that the world was governed by the strong power of Necessity, meaning no blind necessity, but the immutable decrees of his Providence.†

Cicero, elsewhere, mentions Thales as the first Grecian who made any inquiry into these abstruse metaphysical subjects, and, finally, Herodotus, who, by his own confession, had visited the priests of both Heliopolis and Thebes, appears to me to establish the point of the Grecian theology having been brought out of Egypt, by declaring, that "his nation acknowledged to have received the names of their gods from that country;"‡ for, with those names they doubtless received their wonderful history and mysterious rites; the nefarious orgies of the phallica, celebrated at Athens, which are only a mutilated copy of the Indian worship of the lingam; and the sacred pomp of their Osiris and Isis, revived in the

* De Nat. Deorum in loco citato.

† See Diogenes Laertius in Vita Thalis, p. 21.

‡ Herodot. lib. ii. p. 80, idem edit.

Eleuſinian myſteries, whoſe name and rites, however, evince them to be no other than the Eſwara and Iſa, that is, the active and paſſive principles in nature perſonified, of the Brahmin mythologiſts.

That *the immortality of the ſoul* formed a part of the creed of the Indians and Egyptians has been already proved; and Thales, having imbibed their ſentiments on this head, carried this doctrine, probably before Pherecydes, into the ſchools of Greece. He was accuſtomed to denominate the ſoul not only αυτοκινητον, as *having within itſelf the principle of motion*, but alſo κινητικον, as *poſſeſſing the faculty of giving motion to other objects*; and Laertius informs us, he went ſo far as to aſſert, that the loadſtone was endowed with a ſoul, becauſe it poſſeſſed the power of attracting iron.* In fact, the various viciſſitudes which that ſoul endured during its terreſtrial ſojourning, the ſeveral ſtages and degrees of ſorrow and ſuffering through which it toiled in its aſcent to the SUPREME GOOD, together with certain phyſical phænomena connected with the hiſtory of the allegorical deities of India and Egypt, formed the baſis of all the myſteries of Africa and Aſia. The ſtupendous

* Diogenes Laertius in Vita Thalis.

pendous ſcenes which were tranſacting around, as well in the natural as the moral world, the exploring eye of philoſophy contemplated with awe and wonder; and, to impreſs them forcibly on the minds of their pupils, the hoary ſages of antiquity cauſed to be acted over again, in vaſt ſubterraneous theatres, the mighty drama of life and of nature. A deſire to repreſent theſe with correctneſs and energy was the occaſion of giving their dark winding avenues to the holy cavern of Elephanta, and of ſcooping out the deep receſſes of the ſubterraneous labyrinths of the Thebais. The profound and myſtic exhibitions to which Thales and his pupil Pythagoras were witneſſes in thoſe rocky ſhrines; the wonderful ſymbols which they there beheld exalted before the view of the initiated; and the hallowed ſymphonies, unutterable by profane lips, which they there heard recited; had penetrated their inmoſt ſouls with awe and holy reverence: the remembrance of them was never to be obliterated from their hearts, and they, therefore, carried away and engrafted the theological code and ſacred pomps of Egypt upon the infant religion and dawning mythology of Greece. The feſtival ceremonies and religious dogmas of the two

nations

nations ſoon became inſeparably, inextricably, blended; and the myſteries of Greece, though a country which had no caverns like thoſe of India and Thebes, bore, in ſucceeding ages, all the ſtamp and diſtinguiſhing features of the ancient cavern-worſhip of Aſia; the long proceſſion of prieſts, bearing ſacred ſymbols, and of fear-ſtruck candidates, conducted during the awful proceſs of initiation through dreary adyta and winding glooms; the whole temple being, at one time, veiled in the deepeſt midnight darkneſs, and, at another, flaming with the brighteſt ſplendors of the noon-day ſun; the ſhriek of anguiſh and the ſhout of tranſport alternately reſounding as ſtruggling virtue ſuffered or was triumphant. Iſis, converted into Ceres, again heard her cymbals echo through the vault of Eleuſis; while Seeva, indignant, ſaw the inſignia and worſhip of the deity of Benares uſurped by the Athenian Bacchus.

END OF VOLUME THE SECOND.

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Indian antiquities vol: 2

p1 Antique Sculpture-Seeva(Siva)-Brahma-Veeshnu(Vishnu)
p2 Ancient Persian Fire Temple
p3 Introductory Note
p35 Chap 1: Physical and symbolical Theology of Ancient Indians, which resembled with Scythians, Persians, Egyptians and Greeks
p88 General view of the Indian Mythology composed with that of Persian
p90a Persian King stands before a "Sacred Fire"
p104 "Fire is Superior to Brahmins"
p136 Caverns of Elephanta and Salsette
p188 Physical and Symbolical Superstitions of India and Egypt, Origin and History of Hieroglyphic designation-Principal Deities
p206a Ancient Sacrifice to sun found in Upper Egypt(Illustration)
p218a Hieroglyphic Sculptures and Pagoda of Elephanta(Illustration)
p260a First Indian Avatar-Veeshnu(vishnu)(Illustration)
p265 First three Avatars are astronomical allegories, Ancient Doctrines of Metempsychosis
p284 Hope of regaining state of Primitive Perfection and Happiness-"Fall of Man"
p284 Identity of Indran and Greek Theology
p324 Era of Fabrication of caverns of India and Egypt
p324 Greeks obtained Knowledge of Mysterious rites of Asia, through Egypt